



1.23.11.  
Library of the Theological Seminary

PRINCETON, N. J.

From the Library of  
Dr. James McCosh.

Division... BS2555

Section... 4. R64

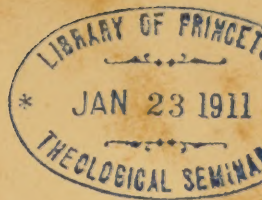




With best regards of  
The Author

---





DISCUSSIONS  
*James M. Losh*  
ON THE GOSPELS.

IN TWO PARTS.

BY

THE REV. ALEXANDER ROBERTS, M.A.,

MINISTER OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ST JOHN'S WOOD, LONDON.

Ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ παρελεύσονται,  
οἱ δὲ λόγοι Μου οὐ μὴ παρέλθωσι.

ST MATT. xxiv. 35; ST MARK xiii. 31; ST LUKE xxi. 33.

LONDON:  
JAMES NISBET AND CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.

M,DCCC,LXII.

[The right of translation is reserved.]

EDINBURGH :  
PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY,  
PAUL'S WORK.

## PREFACE.

---

THE principal argument developed in the following pages was briefly illustrated in a work which I published about three years ago on the Original Language of St Matthew's Gospel. The substance of that work, revised and corrected, will be found engrossed in the present volume. I have also taken this opportunity of referring to some of those criticisms upon it which seemed to deserve or to demand special attention. And during the interval which has elapsed since its publication, I have continued to investigate, as fully as lay within my power, the important questions to which it referred ; and without having found reason to modify, in any material point, the views which were formerly expressed, I now present them, in a much more extended form, to the consideration of biblical scholars.

I had the pleasure of ascertaining that, even as



before set forth, my argument in behalf of the general employment of Greek by our Lord and His disciples went far to satisfy some of the acutest reasoners and ablest critics of whom our country can at present boast. But, as was to be expected, it also encountered not a little opposition, and was in some quarters treated with utter contempt. I am inclined to believe that this may have been due to the very imperfect manner in which it was then presented, and to hope that in its present form it may be attended with better success.

It is needless to detain the reader with any lengthy observations on the interest or importance of the points about to be submitted to his consideration. Few will doubt, that, if my argument is successful, the conclusions reached must have no small influence on some momentous questions connected with the Gospels. But all depends on the *success* of the argument. I therefore say nothing here respecting either the interest or importance of the points discussed, but reserve any remarks of that kind for the concluding chapter of the work.

I only add, that I have not had the advantage of abundant leisure in pursuing those researches of which the result is now given to the world, and that, although there were no other reason than the interrupted and occasional manner in which my work has been composed, I am deeply sensible it will be found marked by many imperfections. But I humbly con-

ceive that it is fitted to be of some service to the cause of Divine truth, and that it may especially tend to impart a fresh interest to one of the most precious portions of Holy Scripture—that which contains a record of the words and works of our adorable Redeemer.

A. R.

ST JOHN'S WOOD, LONDON,

*March 20, 1862.*





# CONTENTS.

---

## PART I.

### ON THE LANGUAGE EMPLOYED BY OUR LORD AND HIS DISCIPLES.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### INTRODUCTION—STATEMENT OF THESIS.

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| Proposition of this Work, . . . . .                     | 1    |
| Different Views which have been held on the Question, . | 5    |
| Preliminary Observations, . . . . .                     | 9    |
| Sources of Evidence, . . . . .                          | 19   |

#### CHAPTER II.

##### HISTORICAL PROOFS OF THE PREVALENCE OF GREEK IN PALESTINE IN THE TIMES OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| General Diffusion of the Greek Language at the commence-<br>ment of the Christian Era, . . . . . | 25         |
| Causes which led to the Prevalence of Greek in Palestine,  | 34         |
| Various Proofs of this Prevalence, . . . . .   | 38         |
| Greek Inscriptions, . . . . .  | 45         |
| Numismatic Evidence, . . . . .   | <i>ib.</i> |
| The Mischna, . . . . .   | 47         |

|                                  | PAGE |
|----------------------------------|------|
| The Works of Philo, . . . . .    | 48   |
| The Works of Josephus, . . . . . | 49   |
| The Apocryphal Books, . . . . .  | 54   |

## CHAPTER III.

PROOF FROM A GENERAL SURVEY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT THAT  
GREEK WAS THE PREVAILING LANGUAGE OF PALESTINE IN THE  
TIMES OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Statement of the Argument, . . . . .       | 65 |
| General Proof from the Epistles, . . . . . | 57 |
| General Proof from the Gospels, . . . . .  | 78 |

## CHAPTER IV.

SPECIAL PROOFS FROM THE GOSPELS THAT GREEK WAS THE PREVAIL-  
ING LANGUAGE OF PALESTINE IN THE TIMES OF CHRIST AND HIS  
APOSTLES.

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| The Sermon on the Mount, . . . . .  | 95  |
| Quotations from the Old Testament in the Gospels, . . . . .                     | 104 |
| Conversation of Christ with the Woman of Samaria, . . . . .                     | 116 |
| Discourse delivered by Christ in Jerusalem, . . . . .                           | 119 |
| Intercourse held by Pilate with Christ and the People of<br>the Jews, . . . . . | 122 |
| Incident connected with the Crucifixion, . . . . .                              | 126 |
| Conversation of Christ with Mary Magdalene, . . . . .                           | 131 |
| Recapitulation, . . . . .   | 133 |

## CHAPTER V.

SPECIAL PROOFS FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES THAT GREEK WAS  
THE PREVAILING LANGUAGE OF PALESTINE IN THE TIMES OF  
CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Narrative of Events on the Day of Pentecost, . . . . .                            | 137 |
| Succeeding Speeches of the Apostles, . . . . .                                    | 143 |
| Meaning of the Terms <i>Hellenists</i> and <i>Hebrews</i> , . . . . .             | 145 |
| Different Opinions regarding the <i>Hellenists</i> and <i>Hebrews</i> , . . . . . | 146 |

# CONTENTS.

ix

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| Discussion of the Question, . . . . .                | 149  |
| Conclusion regarding the Question, . . . . .         | 164  |
| Speech of St Stephen before the Sanhedrim, . . . . . | 166  |
| Succeeding Chapters, . . . . .                       | 168  |
| Council of Jerusalem, . . . . .                      | 170  |
| Tumult excited against St Paul, . . . . .            | 174  |
| Concluding Chapters of the Acts, . . . . .           | 178  |
| Recapitulation, . . . . .                            | 182  |

## CHAPTER VI.

### PROOF FROM THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS OF THE PREVALENCE OF GREEK IN PALESTINE IN THE TIMES OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Questions agitated respecting the Epistle to the Hebrews, .     | 184 |
| Authorship of the Epistle, . . . . .                            | 188 |
| Hypothesis of the exclusively Pauline Authorship, . . . . .     | 195 |
| Hypothesis of the exclusively non-Pauline Authorship, . . . . . | 200 |
| Hypothesis of a Twofold Authorship of the Epistle, . . . . .    | 206 |
| To what Readers the Epistle was originally Addressed, . . . . . | 213 |
| Different Opinions regarding this Point, . . . . .              | 220 |
| Conclusion and Inference, . . . . .                             | 227 |

## CHAPTER VII.

### FURTHER PROOFS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT THAT GREEK WAS THE PREVAILING LANGUAGE OF PALESTINE IN THE TIMES OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Style of the Epistle of James, . . . . .                             | 230 |
| All Records of Christ's Teaching are in Greek, . . . . .             | 235 |
| Existence and Origin of Hellenistic Greek, . . . . .                 | 241 |
| Use of the Septuagint by the Writers of the New Testament, . . . . . | 247 |
| Hymn of the Virgin Mary, . . . . .                                   | 254 |
| Intercourse of the <i>Soldiers</i> with John the Baptist, . . . . .  | 255 |
| Narrative of St Paul's Conversion, . . . . .                         | 256 |
| Use of the terms <i>Alpha</i> and <i>Omega</i> by Christ, . . . . .  | 258 |
| Conclusion, . . . . .  | 259 |



## CHAPTER VIII.

CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS TO THE VIEW THAT GREEK WAS THE  
PREVALENT LANGUAGE OF PALESTINE IN THE TIMES OF CHRIST  
AND HIS APOSTLES.

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| <i>A priori</i> Objection, . . . . .  | 261  |
| Objection from the Existence and Employment of Aramaic<br>among the Jews, . . . . .                             | 268  |
| Objections from the Writings of Josephus, . . . . .   | 270  |
| Objection based on the Assertion that the Jews of Palestine<br>did not use the Translation of the LXX., . . . . | 277  |
| Objection from the Existence of the Targums of Onkelos<br>and Jonathan, . . . . .                               | 283  |
| Objections from the New Testament, . . . . .  | 284  |
| Conclusion, . . . . .   | 298  |

## PART II.

ON THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE OF ST MATTHEW'S  
GOSPEL, AND THE ORIGIN OF THE GOSPELS.

## CHAPTER I.

STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION RESPECTING ST MATTHEW'S GOSPEL,  
AND OF THE METHOD IN WHICH THE INQUIRY SHOULD BE CON-  
DUCTED.

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| The Different Opinions stated, . . . . .                                       | 302 |
| First Principle of Inquiry stated and illustrated, . . . .                     | 312 |
| Second Principle of Inquiry stated and illustrated, . . . .                    | 321 |
| Third Principle of Inquiry stated and illustrated, . . . .                     | 327 |
| Bearing of the Conclusion formerly reached on the Present<br>Question. . . . . | 334 |

## CHAPTER II.

## INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF THE ORIGINALITY OF ST MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| Its General Character, . . . . .  | 340  |
| Mode in which Quotations from the Old Testament are<br>made in it, . . . . .  | 349  |
| Explanations of Hebrew Words and Phrases which occur in it,   | 353  |
| Latinistic Forms which often appear in it, . . . . .  | 357  |
| Frequent and Significant Employment of the Imperfect Tense,   | 359  |
| Occurrence of unusual Greek Expressions which could be<br>expressed in Hebrew only by means of a Circumlocu-<br>tion, . . . . . | 361  |

## CHAPTER III.

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE OF THE ORIGINALITY OF THE EXISTING GREEK  
GOSPEL OF ST MATTHEW.

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Unfounded Assertions of the Advocates of the Hebrew<br>Original on this Point, . . . . .    | 364 |
| Proof of the Divine Authority of the existing Greek Gospel,                                 | 368 |
| Proof of its Authorship by St Matthew, . . . . .  | 369 |
| Manner in which we should deal with the Statements of<br>the Fathers, . . . . .             | 371 |
| The <i>Greek</i> Gospel of St Matthew, the only one we are sure<br>he ever wrote, . . . . . | 373 |
| St John saw and sanctioned the Three Synoptical Gospels,                                    | 375 |

## CHAPTER IV.

STATEMENTS OF ANCIENT WRITERS IN SUPPORT OF THE HEBREW  
ORIGINAL OF ST MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Reference to the Fact already Established, . . . . .   | 381 |
| That Fact being admitted, what the Statements made by<br>the Fathers <i>may</i> prove, . . . . . | 383 |
| Nature of the Evidence derived from the Assertions of early<br>Ecclesiastical Writers, . . . . . | 384 |

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| Statement of Papias as to the Original Language of St<br>Matthew's Gospel, . . . . . | 385  |
| Testimony of Irenæus, . . . . .  | 390  |
| Testimony of Pantæus, . . . . .  | 393  |
| Testimony of Origen, . . . . .   | 395  |
| Testimony of Eusebius, . . . . .   | 397  |
| Testimony of Jerome, . . . . .   | 399  |
| Explanation of the Manner in which the Error of Papias<br>probably arose, . . . . .  | 402  |
| Origin of the Gospel of the Hebrews, . . . . .                                       | 403  |

## CHAPTER V.

## OTHER HYPOTHESES RESPECTING ST MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Fancied Discoveries of the Hebrew Original of St Matthew's<br>Gospel, . . . . .                  | 406 |
| Cureton's Syriac Gospels, . . . . .  | 407 |
| Method of Dr Cureton's Argument, . . . . .   | 410 |
| His Syriac Gospel of St Matthew derived from the Greek,<br>Its Unauthorised Additions, . . . . . | 412 |
| Its Unauthorised Omissions, . . . . .  | 413 |
| Mistaken and Inexact Renderings, . . . . .   | 415 |
| Its Origin, . . . . .  | 416 |
| Hypothesis of a Twofold Original of St Matthew's Gospel,<br>Destitute of Evidence, . . . . .     | 420 |
| Opposed to Phenomena existing in the Greek Gospel, . . . . .                                     | 422 |
|  | 423 |
|  | 426 |

## CHAPTER VI.

## ORIGIN OF THE GOSPELS.

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Difficulties of the Question, . . . . .                                  | 429 |
| Eichhorn's Hypothesis, . . . . .   | 431 |
| Bishop Marsh's Hypothesis, . . . . .                                     | 433 |
| Eichhorn's Amended Hypothesis, . . . . .                                 | 435 |
| Hypothesis of this Work, . . . . .                                       | 437 |
| Explains the Coincidences, . . . . .                                     | 444 |
| Other Suppositions made in order to Accomplish this<br>Object, . . . . . | 449 |



|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| Unsatisfactory Character of the Ur-Evangelium Hypothesis,   | 452  |
| Hypothesis of this Work also explains the Diversities, .  | 453  |
| Impossibility of doing this on the Theory that the Evan-<br>gelists copied from each other, . . . . . | 454  |
| Defects of the Theories of Norton and Davidson, . .   | 456  |
| Course followed by Dr Tregelles, . . . . .  | 461  |
| Only Satisfactory Explanation of all the Phenomena, .   | 464  |

## CHAPTER VII.

## CONCLUSION—APPLICATIONS AND RESULTS.

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Consideration of the First Point established, . . . .   | 466 |
| Interest of the Conclusion that Christ made use of the Greek<br>Language, . . . . .           | 468 |
| Illustrations of its Practical Importance, . . . .  | 472 |
| Application of it to the Question concerning the Author-<br>ship of the Apocalypse, . . . . . | 476 |
| Its Bearing on the Interpretation of the Gospels generally,                                   | 480 |
| Consideration of the Second Point established, . . .  | 483 |
| Its bearing on the General Question of Inspiration, . .                                       | 486 |
| Its Importance in respect to the existing Gospel of St Matthew,                               | 490 |
| Its Influence on the Authority of the whole New Testament,                                    | 492 |
| Consideration of the Third Point established, . . .   | 496 |
| It removes Difficulties hitherto felt Insuperable, . .  | 497 |
| It confirms the Divine Authority of the Gospels, . .  | 499 |
| Preciousness of the Inspired Word of God, . . . .   | 502 |
| Conclusion, . . . . .   | 503 |



PART I.

ON THE LANGUAGE EMPLOYED BY OUR LORD AND  
HIS DISCIPLES.





## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION—STATEMENT OF THESIS.

THE object of the First Part of this Treatise is to prove, chiefly from the NEW TESTAMENT itself, that Greek was widely diffused, well understood, and commonly employed for all public purposes in Palestine, during the period spent on earth by our Lord and His apostles.

In maintaining this proposition, I do not mean to deny that the Hebrew language, in the form of Aramæan, also existed throughout the country, and was, to a considerable extent, made use of among the people. The real state of matters I believe to have been this—that almost all the Jews, both in and beyond Palestine, were then *bilinguals*, that is, they understood Greek, the common language of the civilised world, and their own vernacular dialect, the proper national tongue of the region in which they lived. In this view of the case, the two languages, both commonly made use of by the Jews of Palestine, (though, as we shall see, generally for different purposes), would be the Hebrew, in its modernised and corrupted form, their true ancestral dialect, and the Greek, which had, through the force of circumstances, been introduced

into their country, and flourished side by side with their mother-tongue.\*

The condition of the Palestinian Jews at the date referred to, when regarded in this light, appears to have been quite analogous to that of some of our English colonies at the present day. In several of these, we find two or more different languages simultaneously existing, one of which is the language of the conquerors, and the other of which is a form, more or less corrupted, of the ancient vernacular language of the country. "In Canada," for example, as Latham writes, "the English language first took root after the taking of Quebec in the reign of George the Second. As Canada, however, had been previously a French colony, the European language that was first spoken there was not the English, but the French. Hence, when Quebec was taken, the language of the country fell into two divisions. There were the different dialects of the original Indians, and there was the French of the first European colonists. At the present moment both these languages maintain their ground ; so that the English is spoken only partially in Canada, the French and the Indian existing by the side of it.

"At the Cape of Good Hope, the English is spoken in a similar manner ; that is, it is spoken partially. The original inhabitants were the Caffre and Hottentot tribes of Africa, and the earliest European colonists were the Dutch. For these reasons, Dutch and English, conjointly with the Hottentot and Caffrarian

\* To prevent misconception, it may be well to observe here, once for all, that by *Hebrew* is invariably meant, throughout this work, the Aramæan or Syro-Chaldaic language, except where it is plainly stated that the *ancient Hebrew* is intended.

dialects, form the language of the Cape of Good Hope. In Guiana, too, in South America, English and Dutch are spoken in the neighbourhood of each other, for the same reason as at the Cape." \*

Or, as perhaps still more accurately and clearly representing the state of things which is conceived to have then existed in Palestine, I may briefly refer to the linguistic peculiarity observable at the present day in the islands of the English Channel. In these islands—Guernsey, for instance—almost all the inhabitants understand and employ English; but, side by side with that language, there exists a kind of impure or antiquated French, which, being the old Norman tongue partially corrupted, is still largely made use of by the lower orders of the people. An Englishman, mixing only among the educated classes in the island, would perhaps never suspect that any other language than his own was in common use among its population; but if he penetrate a mile or two into the interior, and accost any of the peasantry in their homes or at their labours, he will soon hear the tones of a foreign tongue, and will find that *it* is generally preferred, in familiar intercourse, to the language of England. Hence it comes to pass, that both English and French, the one language, in many instances, greatly influenced by the other, are known by almost all the natives of the island; and while the educated classes generally make use of the former, the lower orders as generally prefer the latter.

Many similar examples might be referred to, of the ancient vernacular language of a country having been overlaid, so to speak, by that of its conquerors. A

\* Latham on the English Language, vol. i., p. 376.

striking additional illustration is furnished in the fate of the Greek language itself, as employed by the inhabitants of the Ionian Islands. During the supremacy of the Venetians in these islands, the Italian almost entirely superseded the Greek, as the language of education and general public intercourse. At the same time, Greek continued to hold its place as the mother-tongue of the whole native population, and was commonly employed by them in familiar conversation. The ancient vernacular language was never altogether uprooted; but it was, for a lengthened period, entirely deprived of the position which it had formerly occupied, as the medium of polite and public intercourse; while it speedily, of course, became greatly corrupted, from being left to be principally employed by the uneducated classes among the people.\*

Now, these two cases, of the Ionian Islands formerly, and the Channel Islands at the present day, very nearly represent what is here maintained to have been the state of matters in Palestine in the days of Christ. The Greek language I believe to have been almost universally prevalent, and to have been understood and employed, more or less, by all classes in the community. But I also believe that the Greek, though thus generally used, was attended by the Aramæan, which was frequently spoken by all ranks of the native population—was made use of by such, at times, on public as well as private occasions; but was, for the

\* "The language of the country people in the islands has always been Greek, more or less corrupted. That employed in good society, and in commerce, as well as in legislation and official business, was Italian, till the recent adoption of Greek as the language of the legislature, courts of law, and all public departments."—*Ency. Brit.*, 8th edit., Art. Ionian Islands.



most part, employed only in homely and familiar intercourse; and might still be said, though with difficulty, and, amid many exceptions, to maintain its position as the mother-tongue of the inhabitants of the country.

It will be observed, then, and I desire it to be specially noticed, that I put in no claim for the Greek, as having been the *only* language in common use among the Jews in the time of Christ. That claim, though, as we shall immediately see, it has been made, seems to me both paradoxical in itself, and opposed to indubitable facts. But what I maintain, and shall endeavour to prove, is, that Greek was, in several important respects, the then PREVAILING language of Palestine;—that it was, in particular, the language of literature and commerce; the language generally employed in public intercourse; the language which a religious teacher would have no hesitation in selecting and making use of, for the most part, as the vehicle of conveying his instructions, whether orally or in writing; and the language, accordingly, which was thus employed both by our Saviour and His apostles.

Some have taken much higher, and others greatly lower ground upon this question. About a century ago, a treatise\* was published, at Naples, by Diodati,

\* The title of the excellent little treatise here referred to is as follows:—"Dominici Diodati J. C. Neapolitani, de Christo Græce loquente," 8vo, Neapoli, 1767. It had become so rare, that Hug states he could not procure a copy of it, even at Naples; but it is now accessible to all scholars in a neat and convenient form, having been republished in this country some years ago by Dr Dobbin of Trinity College, Dublin. Diodati was a civilian, and not an ecclesiastic, as he is sometimes naturally but erroneously called. In the licence to print the work, which is appended to the original edition, the censor having stated that he had found nothing in it "contrary to sound morals, or the Catholic

in which the learned and ingenious author labours to prove that Greek had, in the days of our Lord, entirely supplanted the old Palestinian dialect, and was, in fact, the only language then generally known among the people. In this particular object, I think, it must be admitted that the author fails. And it is to be regretted that he should have pushed his reasonings to such an extent ; as the fact of his having done so has greatly prejudiced his whole argument. His work excited much attention when it was published ; but, from the extreme ground which it assumed, soon gave rise to a powerful reaction in the opposite direction. We shall have occasion to notice afterwards some of the forced, and almost, at times, ridiculous interpretations to which he has recourse, in order to make good his position. But though his conclusions are of much too sweeping and trenchant a character, and though he uses several bad arguments, while he overlooks many more that are good, it will be admitted by every candid reader of his work, that he collects much and varied information bearing upon the general question, and that his discussion of the

faith," proceeds as follows :—"Quin gratulandum huic juveni est, quem licet non sit ex Ecclesiasticorum ordine, cum juris scientiâ socias fecisse sanctorum voluminum scientiam, atque orientalium linguarum peritiam, atque ad communem Christianorum utilitatem, ac quæstum tot sæculorum intercapedine ignotam hanc sacræ historiæ potissimam, ac principem partem sane quam erudito commentario, et evidentissimorum monumentorum ac rationum ope asseruisse, ingentemque nomini suo famam acquisivisse." Other similar laudations follow ; and when the work was published, "it excited," says Dr Dobbin, "the liveliest interest throughout the learned world, and procured for the author enrolment, by acclaim, among the members of several Academies, and other literary institutions. Royalty itself condescended to express its approbation of the genius and ability of Diodati, and Catherine II. of Russia forwarded to Naples tokens of her imperial regard."

subject is conducted throughout with a lucidity of statement and a liveliness of style, which render it extremely interesting and attractive.

On the other side, it has been maintained that the Greek language was scarcely used at all, in ordinary intercourse, by the Jews of our Saviour's day; and that, accordingly, Aramaic was the language which He generally or exclusively employed. Among the supporters of this view, Dr Pfannkuche may perhaps be referred to as chief. This writer had never himself seen the work of Diodati; but his treatise may nevertheless be regarded as a formal reply to that of the Neapolitan scholar, inasmuch as he made use of the previous reply of De Rossi, which had been published at Parma in 1772. Respecting De Rossi, the learned Professor Hug observes that he "sometimes confounds different periods, often uses poor weapons, but is a stout combatant;" and in all these respects he found in Dr Pfannkuche a not unworthy successor. There is, as every reader must feel, a most irritating want of method, clearness, and logical coherence, in the work of the learned German. In these particulars, no less than in his special object, his treatise is the very antithesis of Diodati's; and were the question in debate to be settled by an appeal to the literary ability displayed by the respective champions, there could be little doubt in whose favour judgment would instantly be pronounced.\*

\* The work of Pfannkuche was translated and published in this country in Vol. II. of Clark's Cabinet Library. We shall have occasion in the sequel to advert to some of the halting conclusions of this writer; meanwhile, in illustration of what is said above, I may simply refer to page 15 of the translation, where we find the translator naïvely remarking on a statement in the original, "It was not good in Dr Pf. to keep for himself the *more decisive* proofs!"

Another extreme opinion on the point in question is, that neither Greek nor Hebrew, but *Latin*, was the language generally prevalent in Palestine in the days of Christ, and the language therefore in which, with few exceptions, the books of the New Testament were originally composed. This hypothesis was first formally advanced by the Jesuit priest, Hardouin, in his *Commentary on the New Testament*, published in 1741.\* It has been adopted by a few Roman Catholic writers,† but manifestly more in the interest of party than of truth. The object, of course, which such a theory tends directly to serve, is to exalt the Vulgate to a superiority over the canonical Greek Gospels, as containing the *ipsissima verba* of our Lord and His apostles. But it is too palpably absurd to be accepted by almost any except those whose minds are completely under the influence of prejudice. It did, however, to a considerable extent, find an acute and learned supporter in the author of "*Palæoromaica*," a work published anonymously in London in 1822. This volume,

\* The ground assumed by Hardouin will be plain from a single sentence. Speaking of the writers of the New Testament, he says, "*Arbitramur enim scripsisse Latine quæcunque scripserunt; nonnulla etiam Græce fortassis: Ebraice etiam Apocalypsim fuisse scriptam, non Latine tantum.*" The views of Hardouin were fully refuted by *Lamius* in his very curious work, "*De Eruditione Apostolorum*," &c., pp. 1072-1135.

† The chief of these is *Molkenbuhr*, who thinks that, on every ground, there is reason to believe that the New Testament was written, not in Greek, but in Latin. He says, (p. 46,) "*Die Sache blos à priori betrachtet, ist es wahrscheinlicher, dass, wie Harduin meynet, das Neue Testament ursprünglich nicht in griechischen, sondern in lateinischer Sprache geschrieben sei. A posteriori aber; was wirklich geschehen ist, kommt es auf äusserliche Zeugnisse, und innerliche Kennzeichen an.*" He was conclusively answered by *Binterim*, another Roman Catholic priest, in a work entitled, "*De Lingua Originali Novi Testamenti non Latina*," &c.



though now almost forgotten, excited not a little attention at the time of its appearance. Some of the best scholars in the Church of England entered the lists against the accomplished author, while he, for his part, shewed no want of spirit in defending the views which he had so unexpectedly propounded. It is needless to add to whose side victory inclined. The theory of Black (for such was the author's name) was, indeed, what Johnson might have called mere "unresisting imbecility," and was sufficiently refuted in its announcement; but the work itself, though wedded to this untenable hypothesis, is nevertheless full of learning, both biblical and classical, and may, on this account, still be read with pleasure and instruction.\*

In entering on the proof of that position which it is the object of this work to establish, I am deeply sensible of the opposition to be encountered on the part of many eminent biblical scholars. As Vossius long ago remarked, "It has come, in some way or other, to be an accepted opinion among the learned, that our Lord and His apostles employed not the Greek, but the Hebrew language."† This assumption (for I hold it

\* The title of this curious work is as follows:—"Palæoromaica, or Historical and Philological Disquisitions, inquiring whether the Hellenistic Style is not Latinistic? Whether the many new words in the Elzevir Greek Testament are not formed from the Latin? And, Whether the hypothesis that the Greek text of many MSS. of the New Testament is a translation or retranslation from the Latin, seems not to elucidate numerous passages; to account for the different recensions; and to explain many phenomena hitherto inexplicable to Biblical Critics?" London, Murray, 1822. Among those who published answers to the work are to be found the names of Maltby, (afterwards Bishop of Durham), Bishop Burgess, Dr Falconer, &c.

† "Verum nescio quâ ratione factum sit ut hoc nostro sæculo plerique fere docti Christum et Apostolos Hebraice semper locutos fuisse, existiment, non autem Græce. . . . Nullis profecto vel argumentis vel testimoniis nititur hæc opinio."—*Is. Vossius, De Sybillinis Oraculis,*

nothing more) meets us everywhere throughout our biblical literature. It is found in all commentaries on the New Testament, whether popular or critical, and is for the most part referred to by writers of all sorts, as if it were an unquestionable fact. So firmly imbedded is this notion in the minds of many, that they seem to claim for it all the respect due to a primary truth—will not so much as listen to any arguments which tend to contradict it, and have nothing but ridicule for those who venture to propound them. Their minds are made up on the subject; they wonder that any one possessed of “common sense” should ever stir the question, which has, in their opinion, been so conclusively settled; and, with a scoff or a sneer, which takes no account of reason, they dismiss all that may be adduced in favour of the opposite conclusion.

I need hardly say that it is only a deep conviction of the soundness of those views which are set forth in this work, and of their extreme importance in regard to some biblical questions, that could have induced me, in such circumstances, to venture on their publication. I have often been tempted to acquiesce quietly in the prevailing opinion. The fact that such eminent scholars as Ewald and Renan, not to mention here many others, both at home and abroad, have expressed themselves so confidently in favour of the idea that our Lord and His disciples generally made use of

cap. xvi. If this was the prevailing opinion among biblical scholars in the days of Vossius, it is certainly not less so in our own. *Thiersch*, referring to a statement of *Weisse*, that St Mark has preserved some *Greek* words as they were really uttered by our Lord, speaks of this idea as being “im Widerspruch mit der jetzt mit Recht herrschenden Ansicht, dass Christus gewöhnlich in der Landessprache redete.”—*Versuch zur Herstellung*, &c., p. 68.

Hebrew,\* has often presented itself with almost overwhelming force to my mind. I have felt as if, after all, I *must* be mistaken. But if so, I can only say that, the more I have examined the subject, the more has my confidence in the views propounded in this work increased. And I have a humble hope that, however much opposed to reigning opinions these views may be felt to be, they will not be regarded by biblical scholars as the offspring of mere folly or presumption, but will be taken for what they are worth, as the earnest, though most imperfect, fruit of some study on the part of one whose highest ambition it is to promote, in however small a degree, the interests of sacred truth.

It may be observed, however, that, of late years, there has been some tendency shewn among scholars to reconsider this question, and, more or less, to accept what I believe to be the truth regarding it. Most of our leading critics, native and foreign, now acknowledge that the Greek language was far more generally used in Palestine, in our Lord's time, than the school of De Rossi or Dr Pfannkuche imagined. Among English scholars, for example, Dean Alford often expresses himself to the effect that "Greek was commonly spoken in Palestine," though, as we shall afterwards see, he falls into several difficulties, from the limitations which he thinks it necessary to append to this statement. And among foreign critics, Winer affirms, in his "Real-Wörterbuch," that "the Jews, ever since the epoch of the Seleucidæ, were, to a great

\* *Ewald's* language on the point in question is very strong. Referring to our Lord, he says: "Es ist an sich einleuchtend dass nur die allgemein verständliche Landessprache seinem Zwecke dienen konnte; und eine andre noch neben ihr zu gebrauchen lag für ihn keinerlei

extent, acquainted with the Greek language;”\* and refers, in his “Grammar of the New Testament Idiom,” to the sacred writers, as “persons who, though not possessing any scholastic acquaintance with literature, nevertheless heard Greek continually spoken by those around them, and very often themselves correctly employed that language.”† Yet, even among those who advance farthest in this direction, there still appears a backwardness to trust only to *facts* for the ultimate conclusion to be held on this subject. They seem to be unduly influenced by various *à priori* considerations. Admitting that, “for literary purposes, Greek was, undoubtedly, the prevailing language in Palestine,” they yet refuse to occupy the ground assumed in this work, as to its habitual employment by our Lord and His disciples. “It can hardly be maintained,” they remark, “that *never*, in the course of His ministry, did Jesus address the common people in the vernacular, as when He went through the villages teaching, or when He entered into the synagogue, and read and expounded Isa. lxi. 1, (Luke iv. 17.) Nor can it be supposed, whatever extension and *prevalence* of the Greek language in Palestine may be conceded, that all words of other interlocutors which are given

Veraulassung vor, noch finden wir davon dass er noch eine andre nämlich die griechische irgendwo, gebraucht habe die geringste Spur.”—*Jahrbücher der Biblischen Wissenschaft*, ii. 185. Renan simply says: “Nous pensons que le Syro-Chaldaïque était la langue la plus répandue en Judée, et que le Christ ne dut pas en avoir d'autre dans ses entretiens populaires.”—*Histoire des Langues Sémitiques*, p. 223, Sec. Ed.

\* Gewiss ist dass die Juden, seit der Seleucidischen Periode, zum grossen Theil griechisch verstanden.”—*Winer, R.W.B.*, Art. Sprache.

† Männer, welche zwar Kein wissenschaftliches Sprachstudium trieben, aber das griechische beständig sprechen hörten, und sehr oft, ja regelmässig selbst sprachen.”—*Winer, Gram. des Neut. Sprach.* p. 33.



in Greek in the Gospels, were uttered in Greek,—such as addresses from poor lepers, exclamations from the populace, and the like.”\*

I quote these sentences because they probably put the case against us as strongly as it admits of, and because I am anxious at once to deal with the difficulty which they suggest. That difficulty, or apparent difficulty, I do not mean to deny or depreciate. There certainly does seem to us, standing on *à priori* ground, a great antecedent improbability against the proposition that it was the Greek language which our Lord and those about Him almost continually employed. A strong tendency is at once felt to pronounce such a thing impossible. We can hardly conceive that a language, which it is almost the highest triumph of scholarship to master at the present day, could, even in its simplest form, have been familiarly employed by the humblest of the people in Palestine. And we have been so much accustomed to think of the *Hebrew* language in connexion with the Jews, and to consider the employment of Greek as the very badge of Gentilism, that it is perhaps with a kind of reluctance we conceive of our Lord and His immediate followers as using any other than the ancient, distinctive language of the country. But what then? Shall we yield so far to the influence of these feelings as to refuse to consider such facts as seem to oppose them? Shall our views of the likely or the unlikely hinder us from doing homage to the positive and the actual? If it can be proved (as I maintain it can) that for several generations before Christ, Greek had been generally used

\* *Westminster Review*, July 1859, p. 255, in a very fair and able notice of the author's former work.

throughout Syria and the neighbouring regions, and that in the days of our Lord especially, it was everywhere current in Palestine, shall we allow any supposed improbabilities, however strong, to debar us from the conclusion to which these considerations lead? If we adopt such a principle in dealing with the past, we shall speedily make wild work among the facts of history. It may, for instance, be felt not a little difficult at times to believe, that the Choruses of Æschylus, or the Orations of Demosthenes, which require so much study from us that we may thoroughly understand them, were prepared for the populace of Athens; but the fact is nevertheless too certain to be disputed.\* And in like manner, I beg to appeal from fancies to facts in regard to the point in question. In the phraseology of Bacon, here strictly applicable, I claim to be allowed a free *interrogatio Scripturæ* on the subject, and not to be deprived of this by that *anticipatio Scripturæ* which pronounces that certain things *cannot* be supposed or believed. I do not undertake to prove that our Lord and His followers *never* made use of the Hebrew language. That would be a rash, and, I think, untenable assertion. But what I maintain, and mean to prove, is, that Greek was the language which they habitually used in their public addresses; so that if any one affirms that Hebrew was used on some occasions, when their discourses have been reported in Greek, it remains with

\* "The tragic writer was preacher, essayist, and lecturer, as well as poet; a fact not to be doubted when we consider how familiar to the multitude those writings must have been, when a casual quotation by a comic author, or even an indirect allusion by a rival poet, could find an immediate response in the vast assembly of the Athenian theatre." —*Paley's Æschylus*, 1861, p. xxvi. To those who have puzzled over the obscurities of Æschylus, the fact of such familiarity with his verses might seem *à priori* not a little questionable.

him to shew it. I may be inclined to believe that some such occasions are possibly to be met with in the Gospel history; but at any rate I affirm that these were altogether exceptional, and that Greek was the language usually employed in addressing even the very humblest of the people. The position which I uphold is thus the exact converse of that usually maintained upon the subject. While it is generally said that our Lord spoke *for the most part* in Hebrew, and only *sometimes* in Greek, what I venture to maintain is, that HE SPOKE FOR THE MOST PART IN GREEK, AND ONLY NOW AND THEN IN HEBREW. And all I ask is to be allowed a fair trial. If I fail to adduce sufficient proof that Greek *was* the tongue thus spoken by our Lord and His disciples, then let judgment be given accordingly; but if I do succeed in producing such evidence, let not its force be blunted, and the cause of truth injured, by any *à priori* considerations.

And here I may observe that while the *inductive* method of argument is to be rigidly followed throughout this work, a very different course has been adopted by those on the opposite side. I propose in the sequel to lead the reader from facts to conclusions; but the writers referred to have rather been in the habit of simply regarding certain facts as *illustrative* of the conclusion already formed. Our Lord, for example, is represented by the evangelists, as making use of the Aramaic language on some few occasions. Now, it is manifest that, on an inductive process of reasoning, these form no sufficient basis for the conclusion, that He *always* or *generally* employed that language. But the supposition is first made that He *did* continually make use of that form of speech, and then

these rare instances of its employment, are referred to as examples of the practice which has already been assumed as habitual; or again, some abstract principle, such as the ineradicable character of national speech, is adopted as a universal truth, and then it is reasoned deductively from that principle, as to the general employment of *Hebrew* by our Lord and His apostles. But in the following pages we are to follow an entirely different process. We shall assume nothing, except that the works are genuine which form the sources to which an appeal must be made on this question. We are to look simply and exclusively at facts; and it will be evident, I trust, to every reader, that this is done in a spirit of fairness, and with a sincere and honest desire to reach and vindicate the truth.

In order still more completely to open up the way for an impartial dealing with the facts which are to be brought forward, let me here direct the reader's attention to a case, in which the same antecedent improbability might seem to have existed to the use of Greek as to its employment by even "poor lepers" in Palestine, and we shall see how necessary it is to lay aside all prepossession in dealing with such a question. The case referred to is set before us in the fourteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. In that chapter (ver. 8-18) we have an account of what occurred while Paul and Barnabas were in Lystra, a city of Lycaonia. We read first of Paul's speaking to the people at large, and then, successively, of his addressing a lame man who attracted his attention in the crowd, of the cure which was accomplished by his words, of the excitement which this miracle gave rise to among the men of the city, of the attempt which was accordingly made



to offer divine honours to the apostles, and of the address, dissuading from this purpose, which was delivered to the assembled multitude. Now, the state of matters plainly indicated in this narrative, with respect to the languages then employed in Lycaonia, forms an exact parallel to what I believe to have been the linguistic condition of Palestine in the time of Christ. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the apostles then spoke *only* in Greek ;\* and in doing so, they were perfectly well understood by the inhabitants of Lystra. The *poor cripple*, even, who probably owed as little to what is technically known as education as did *poor lepers* in Palestine, was quite able to follow Paul speaking in Greek ; and having “faith to be healed,” he was singled out from the rest of the crowd, and individually addressed by the apostle in these very words, “*Ἀνάστηθι ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας σου ὀρθός,*”—words which were at once apprehended by his understanding, and which, at the same time, producing their proper effect upon his heart, were made the means of conveying to him a faculty which he had not before possessed. Upon this, a thrill of astonishment and awe passed

\* Like many other obvious facts which happen to clash with a favourite hypothesis, this has indeed been doubted or denied. See, *e.g.*, the recent learned Commentaries of Canon Wordsworth and the Rev. F. C. Cook on the Acts of the Apostles, in both of which we find statements to the effect that the apostles understood and employed the Lycaonian tongue. This supposition is in the very teeth of the inspired narrative, and, as has been often observed, leaves the conduct of Paul and Barnabas at this time absolutely without explanation. The almost universal opinion of biblical scholars, both at home and abroad, is expressed by Prof. Hackett when he says, that the apostles, “in conferring with the people, had used, doubtless, the Greek ;” and when he also remarks, “Luke mentions that the Lystrians spoke in their native tongue, that we may know why the multitude proceeded so far in their design before Paul and Barnabas interposed to arrest it.”—*Hackett's Comm. on the Acts, in loc.*



through the multitude. They imagined themselves in the presence of some superior beings ; and, excited by this thought, they fell back, as was most natural in such circumstances, on the use of their native dialect, and exclaimed in the language of Lycaonia, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men !" Under this impression, they proceeded to prepare sacrifices with which to do honour to their celestial visitants ; and Paul and Barnabas, apparently not comprehending their purpose, did not, for a time, interpose to prevent them. But as soon as they learned what was really proposed, they hastened to put a stop to the impious attempt, one or both immediately addressing the promiscuous assemblage in words of great eloquence and power, and that evidently in the *Greek* language.

Here, then, we have a case in which two distinct languages or dialects were in common and familiar use among the people. There was the old, vernacular tongue of Lycaonia, (whatever that may have been,) endeared by many tender and venerable associations to the inhabitants of the country. There was also the Greek, known, as is manifest, to all ranks among the population, regularly employed as the vehicle of public instruction or address, and habitually made use of in the market-place or popular assembly, as it was so readily and successfully by the apostles on this occasion.

Now, for *Lystra* read *Jerusalem*, and the above incident sets forth exactly what I undertake to prove as to the relation subsisting between the two languages of Palestine in the time of Christ. It is not meant to be denied, that, as a matter of *feeling*, the ancient, vernacular language of the country may have

possessed some peculiar charms to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as the old speech of Lycaonia manifestly did to the inhabitants of Lystra. But it is meant to be affirmed, that, as a matter of *fact*, in the one case as in the other, Greek was the ordinary language of public intercourse and instruction. There may have been occasions of great excitement (as we shall afterwards see) on which the Jews, like the Lycaonians, would prefer the accents of their ancestral tongue; but these very occasions, from their exceptional character, tend to confirm the truth of that proposition which it is the object of this work to establish.

Not a little has been accomplished by previous investigators with respect to what may be called the external or historical part of the argument; so that, to a considerable extent, we shall merely require, in this department, to gather together the proofs which have already been indicated or adduced. In addition to Diodati, in the work formerly described, Professor Hug,\* in particular, has laboured very assiduously in this portion of the field, and has accumulated much valuable information on the point at issue. But both Diodati and Hug, as well as all the other writers on this question with whom I am acquainted, have left one important branch of the evidence almost entirely untouched. They are very painstaking and successful in collecting historical proofs from other ancient writings and monuments, as to the prevalence of Greek in Palestine at the commencement of our era; but their references to the proof of this fact, which is contained in the books of the New Testament itself, are meagre and insufficient. There seems, indeed, to

\* See his "Introduction to the New Testament," Part ii., § 10.

be what I cannot but humbly reckon a mischievous fallacy existing in the minds of not a few scholars in regard to this subject. They speak of the position sought to be established in this work, as being "perfectly untenable in face of *the mass of evidence* to the contrary with which Oriental scholars are familiar."\* Now, I can truly declare that I have anxiously investigated every item of this evidence of which I could discover the slightest trace. Not the least part of it has been willingly left out of account in forming the conclusion which is set forth in this work. But I confess I have found no great "mass of evidence," apart from the New Testament itself, bearing upon the question. All the sources of information with which I am acquainted may be classed under the following heads:—

I. Works generally allowed to precede the birth of Christ, or to belong to the first century of our era—viz., the Septuagint translation and the Apocryphal books of the Old Testament; the canonical writings of the New Testament, consisting of the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the fourteen Epistles of St Paul, the two Epistles of St Peter, the three Epistles of St John, the Epistle of St James, the Epistle of St Jude, and the Apocalypse of St John; the writings of Philo and Josephus; and, perhaps, the Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians.

II. Works referred to an early period in our era, but the exact date of which is doubtful—viz., the most ancient Targums; the Mischna, (in its substance;)

\* I quote these words from a review of my former work, which appeared in the *Athenæum* of June 16, 1860, and in which it was spoken of in quite as kind terms as it deserved. I only wish that the writer had specified some of that "mass of evidence" to which he referred.

the Syriac Peschito version ; some of the later Apocryphal books.

III. Statements to be found in some of the classical and patristic writers bearing on the point in question.

IV. Numismatic evidence, and inscriptions to be met with on ruins existing throughout Syria and Palestine.

Such is the whole amount of evidence of which I have been able to learn anything in connexion with this subject. It will all be found referred to, as occasion offers, in the following pages ; and a glance at it is sufficient to shew that the New Testament itself contains by far its largest and most valuable portion.

And here I cannot but remark how important it is in dealing with this, and many other biblical questions, ourselves to approach to those *integri fontes*, from which flows almost all that is really of importance in determining our judgment. There is great danger, lest the amiable, but perhaps somewhat indolent, habit of acquiescing in the opinions of ancient fathers, or venerated reformers, or illustrious scholars, should prevent us from looking with our own eyes at the true and primal source of almost all that can with certainty be known, respecting either our faith itself, or the circumstances amid which it was ushered into the world. It does not fall within our present purpose to illustrate how much detriment has in this way been entailed on the cause of divine truth, and how errors of various kinds, which might have been corrected by a simple, unprejudiced reference to the New Testament, have been propagated from age to age in the Church. I shall merely remark on this point, that it certainly requires no very lengthened experience in



critical pursuits, to render the student suspicious of the validity of some of those traditional explanations of difficult passages, which he finds repeated by one commentator after another. If he traces the history of such explanations, he will probably find that some writer, centuries ago, hazarded a conjecture as to the meaning of the dark or ambiguous phrase in question—that this opinion was then adopted by another, as if it had *now* some really substantial ground to stand upon—and that thus coming down to us from a venerable antiquity, it seems to demand acceptance as a matter of right at the present day, whereas, in truth, the person who first offered the conjecture had nothing more to guide him than we still possess in the original text. Let us, then, in the question which we are about to investigate, look, for ourselves, at the evidence of Scripture. Eusebius may tell us again and again, that the apostles understood no language except *Syriac*;\* but let not that deter us from weighing impartially the evidence which may be adduced to shew that they both understood and employed *Greek*. The Rabbinical writers may, according to their fancy, at one time inform us that the Jews of Palestine *despised* those who employed the Greek language; and may, at another time, go so far as even to ascribe *divine inspiration* to the Septuagint version of the Scriptures;†

\* *Euseb.*, “Dem. Evang.,” lib. iii. In one passage of this book, Eusebius speaks of the apostles as τῆς Σύρων οὐ πλέον ἐπαίοντες φωνῆς. And in another passage, he represents the apostles as (but for the promise of Divine assistance) being in circumstances to reply to their Lord’s command to “go and teach all nations,” in such words as these: ποία δὲ χρησόμεθα λέξει πρὸς Ἕλληνας, ἄνδρες τῇ Σύρων ἐντραφέντες μόνη φωνῇ;

† See this point further noticed in Chapter VIII. of this work; and



but let neither the one statement nor the other divert us from the track by which alone there is any likelihood that truth and certainty will be reached in the matter. To the New Testament itself, above all else, we make our appeal ; for, in the writings which it contains, we find by far the largest and most reliable portion of that evidence which is available to settle the question about to be considered. It can hardly be doubted that this would have been generally perceived and acted upon, had the books which constitute the New Testament happened to be the productions of secular, instead of sacred, writers. If we possessed such a number of the works of other Jews who lived in that age as we have in the New Testament, it would have been felt that little difficulty ought to remain as to the language which then prevailed among them. But it has happened here, as with some other more important points connected with our religion. That tendency which has led, in many cases, to the neglect of the strong confirmation of the truth of Christianity, which is found in the acceptance of it as divine by such a man as PAUL, simply *because he did accept it*, has also led to the overlooking of the evidence which the New Testament itself furnishes as to the language of Palestine in the age in which it was written, simply *because it is the New Testament*. That collection of sacred writings contains histories and epistles by no fewer than eight different authors ; and if it be admitted that their works are the genuine products of the age to which we ascribe them, it must also be acknowledged that they lay open to us a source of information, in

compare with the above remarks *Stanley's* "Sermons on the Apostolic Age," p. 31 ; and *Jowett*, in "Essays and Reviews," p. 384.

regard to the question at issue, compared with which all that can be gathered from other quarters is utterly insignificant. To this most precious, but greatly neglected portion of the evidence, I propose in the sequel principally to direct attention. The writers of the New Testament will themselves be interrogated, as the leading witnesses in the question regarding the language generally employed by our Lord and His disciples ; and before proceeding to this, I shall merely give a summary in the following chapter, of what, by way of distinction, I have ventured to call the external, or historical argument.

## CHAPTER II.

### HISTORICAL PROOFS OF THE PREVALENCE OF GREEK IN PALESTINE IN THE TIMES OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.

It must be admitted by all that the Greek tongue had become very widely and generally known throughout the world before the birth of Christ. Greek, indeed, was then the common language of all civilised nations,\* and thus formed a medium of intercourse between countries far separated in geographical position, as well as differing greatly in national habits and institutions. Many and powerful causes had contributed to this result. A foundation was laid for it in the transcendent merits of the language itself. Never has a tongue been spoken by man which can vie with the Greek in all that constitutes the excellency of a language. In copiousness, plasticity, melody, and power, it has ever been and probably will ever remain, unrivalled. It was natural, therefore, that, as the world advanced, under the wise and benignant providence of God, in knowledge and civilisation, this pre-eminent language should more and more attract attention, and acquire

\* "Die griechische Sprache war damals in der ganzen gesitteten Welt verbreitet."—*De Wette, Einleitung in das N. T.*, § 1.

ascendancy. It was in itself the very queen of languages ; and it could not but happen that, as refinement, and the desire for intellectual improvement continued to spread throughout the earth, its manifest title to supremacy, as the best means ever devised for expressing all kinds of human thought, should be, more and more, practically acknowledged and proved.

And, as contributing to this result, there must also be taken into account the literary treasures which, from a very early date in the history of nations, it had contained. Not only was the Greek language in itself an instrument of exceeding beauty and power, but that instrument had been so used as to give rise to many of the very masterpieces of human intellect and genius. In poetry, in philosophy, in history, and in eloquence, Greece had already, centuries before the Christian era, poured forth in her own unequalled tongue, effusions of still unequalled excellence—so perfect, indeed, that it has been the highest ambition, and well-nigh the despair, of all subsequent ages simply to imitate and approach them. It was doubly impossible, therefore, if the world continued in a course of progressive improvement, that the tongue of Greece should not, more and more, be studied, and prevail. Mankind, advancing in knowledge and refinement, could not possibly remain satisfied without a wide-spread acquaintance with the language of Homer, Plato, and Demosthenes ; and, however much the political influence of Greece might wane among the nations, it was certain that, if light and literature continued to spread, her intellectual dominion would survive and increase.

The familiar line of Horace, in which he tells us of

his own country that—"Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit," just expresses what must in every case have happened, unless mankind were to retrograde instead of advancing—to relapse into barbarism and darkness, instead of pressing forward in the career of civilisation and improvement.\*

But, besides these resistless intrinsic claims on the homage and submission of mankind, there were other events of an external character, that powerfully tended to the dissemination and supremacy of the Greek literature and language. The triumphant march of the great Alexander from his native Macedon to the banks of the Indus; the complete subjugation of so many different nations by his arms; the settlement of Greek princes on the thrones of those mighty kingdoms, into which, on his death, his colossal empire was divided; and the establishment of numerous colonies of Greeks throughout the countries which he had subdued—all necessarily led to the very wide diffusion of the Greek language, and to a general tendency to imitate Greek manners and institutions. And thus, that very language which, had it been left to be judged by its own merits, would assuredly have recommended itself above every other to the general admiration of mankind, was almost forced upon their adoption by many concurring providential circumstances, and secured in favour of its extensive diffusion the prestige arising from military supremacy, no less than the more legitimate claims founded on inherent superiority, and unequalled literary attractiveness.

\* "Above all, it is due to the intellectual results produced by the inhabitants of this small canton of Europe (Attica), that the language in which they spoke and wrote became the vernacular tongue of the whole world."—*Wordsworth's Greece*, p. 119.



Now, as was to be expected from the combined operation of all these causes, there exists the amplest and clearest testimony to the wide-spread ascendancy which had been gained by the tongue of Greece before the birth of Christ. A familiar acquaintance with it was more or less possessed by almost all those nations which were then embraced under the sway of Imperial Rome. Nay, so penetrative had proved the genius of the Greek language, that we find traces of its use even among barbarous tribes, while still unsubdued by the Roman arms, and totally unacquainted with the Latin literature. Thus Julius Cæsar narrates in his Commentaries, that, on taking possession of the camp of the Helvetii, he found in it lists of the several Gallic nations which had leagued with that people in their enterprise, *written in Greek*: and the same historian informs us, that, while the Druids did not think it lawful to commit to writing the topics dwelt upon in their sacred verses, they were accustomed to employ the *Greek* characters in almost all other public and private transactions.\*

While acquiring this so world-wide diffusion, the ancient tongue of Greece had, of course, become greatly corrupted. Ionic softness and Attic elegance had in

\* "In castris Helvetiorum tabulæ repertæ sunt literis Græcis confectæ."—*Cæsar, De Bell. Gall.*, lib. i., 29. "Neque fas esse existimant, ea literis mandare, quum in reliquis fere rebus, publicis privatisque rationibus, Græcis utantur literis."—*Ibid.*, lib. vi., 14. It is doubtful whether these passages imply that the Greek *language*, or, perhaps rather, only the Greek *letters* were in use among the Gauls. Either way, proof is furnished of the wide extent within which Hellenic influence was then felt even among barbarous nations. The same thing appears from the striking question of *Seneca*, "*Consol. ad Helviam*," cap. vi., "Quid sibi volunt in mediis barbarorum regionibus Græcæ urbes? quid inter Indos Persasque Macedonicus sermo?" Comp. also *Tacit.* "*Germ.*," cap. iii.

many instances been replaced by a worse than Doric or Æolian harshness. The vernacular dialects had everywhere exerted a very marked and debasing influence upon the adopted tongue. But still the language of Herodotus and Euripides had, in its substance, pervaded the Roman dominions before the birth of Christ; and was then, as well as for some generations afterwards, the link by which the most distant portions of the world-owning Cæsar's rule were socially and intellectually held together. In the gigantic capital itself, which might have been regarded as the empire in miniature, since, under its ample wings, representatives were gathered from the farthest provinces, the Greek tongue was continually employed. In the reign of Tiberius, as Valerius Maximus, a contemporary writer informs us, the Senate resounded even to deafening with *Greek* debates;\* and Dio Cassius relates that the same Emperor was accustomed very frequently to hear cases argued, and himself to investigate them, in the *Greek* language.† Suetonius bears equally striking testimony to the very general use of Greek by the Romans, under Tiberius and Claudius; and, by the account which he gives of the efforts made by the former Emperor to discourage its use in certain cases, shews how greatly it had encroached on the vernacular language.‡ In the reign of Domitian, as we infer

\* "Quis ergo huic consuetudini, quâ nunc Græcis actionibus aures curiæ exsurdantur, januam patefecit?"—*Val. Max.*, lib. ii., cap. ii., 3.

† "Πολλὰς μὲν δίκας ἐν τῇ διαλέκτῳ ταύτῃ καὶ ἐκεῖ λεγομένας ἀκούων, πολλὰς δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπερωτῶν."—*Dio Cass.*, lib. lvii., cap. 15.

‡ "Sermone Græco, quanquam alias promptus et facilis, non tamen usquequaque usus est, abstinuitque maxime in senatu, adeo quidem, ut 'monopolium' nominaturus, prius veniam postulârit, quod sibi verbo peregrino utendum esset. . . . *Militem* quoque *Græce* interrogatum, nisi Latine respondere vetuit."—*Suet.*, Tib., cap. 71. (Comp. *Seneca*,

from Martial, it was a proof of absolute rusticity not to be perfectly familiar with the tongue of Greece ;\* while, in the reign of Trajan, as we learn from Juvenal,† that language was continually employed by his fellow-citizens for all sorts of purposes. And in these, as well as other similar intimations contained in the classical writers, we find proof that, while, during the period in question, almost countless dialects, in addition to the native Latin, might have been heard among the vast and multifarious population of Rome, the various tribes there mixed together possessed in the language of Greece, then become the language of the world, a means whereby they could communicate with one another.‡

"De Irâ," lib. ii., cap. v.) "Sæpe in senatu, legatis perpetuâ oratione (Græcâ) respondit. Multum vero pro tribunali etiam Homericis locutus est versibus."—*Suet.*, Claud., cap. xlii.

\* "Rusticus es? nescis quid Græco nomine dicar?"

—*Mart.*, Epig. xiv., 58.

†

"Omnia Græce,

Cum sit turpe magis nostris nescire Latine.

Hoc sermone pavent, hoc iram, gaudia, curas,

Hoc cuncta effundunt animi secreta," &c.

—*Juv.*, Sat. vi., 186, seq.

Again :

"Non possum ferre, Quirites,

Græcam urbem; quamvis quota portio fœcis Achææ?

Jampridem Syrus in Tiberim defluxit Orontes

Et linguam et mores," &c.

—*Ibid.*, Sat. iii., 60, seq.

See also *Ovid*, "Ars Amat.," ii., 121, 122; *Tacitus*, "De Oratoribus," cap. xxix.; *Martial*, lib. x., 68, &c.

‡ With respect to the extent and population of the Rome of the Cæsars, we find the following statement by one whose competency to form a judgment on such a point will be generally admitted. *Thomas de Quincey* describes it "as a city which counted from one horn to the other of its mighty suburbs not less than *four millions* of inhabitants at the very least, as we resolutely maintain, after reviewing all that has been written on that much-vexed theme."—*De Quincey's Works*, last edition, vol. x., p. 2. This immense assemblage of human beings,

There seems, in fact, to have existed among the Romans, during several generations, both before and after the birth of Christ, a strong and universal passion for the Greek language and literature. Hence we find Cicero often complaining, with no small bitterness, of the neglect with which writings in the proper language of Latium were received; and Juvenal, notwithstanding the noble native literature which had accumulated during the Augustan age, still finds it necessary, in his own day, to direct his sarcasms against the prevailing preference for the fascinating language of Greece.\* Hence, also, we learn without surprise, that, throughout the period in question, Greek was freely employed in all parts of the empire by Roman orators, generals, and magistrates. Cicero himself spoke in Greek in the senate at Syracuse. Crassus, when, as proconsul, he made war against Aristonicus, in Asia, shewed himself so familiar with the Greek language, that he even addressed each of

(for such the undoubted population of Rome at the time must be admitted to have been), collected from almost every nation under heaven, must have had a common language, and that could be no other than the Greek. Latin, of course, remained the language of all the native population, but, even in respect to these, the strongly-expressed opinion of such a scholar as Grotius is meant to apply, when he says, "*Romanorum vix quisquam erat non Græce intelligens.*"—*Grot., Annot. in Tit. Marci.* Compare on this whole subject the remarks of an eminent living authority among ourselves, *Max Müller*, "*Lectures on the Science of Language,*" pp. 90–100. At p. 91, we find the following statement: "The fact is, that as long as we know anything of Italy, the Greek language was as much at home there as Latin."

\* Cicero's feelings on this point are specially manifested in his treatise "*De Finibus,*" lib. i., 1, 2, 3, and often come out in other parts of his writings. There is a curious coincidence in the expressions employed by the great Latin orator on the one hand, and the great satirist on the other, when they respectively declare, "*Non tam præclarum est scire Latine, quam turpe nescire.*"—*Cicero in Bruto*, cap. xxxviii.; and "*Cum sit turpe magis nostris nescire Latine.*"—*Juv., Sat. vi.*, 187.



the Greek tribes in its own proper dialect—speaking to the Ionians in Ionic, to the Dorians in Doric, and to the Æolians in Æolic, as well as employing the Attic and common dialects, when occasion required. Augustus, as conqueror and sovereign, addressed the people of Alexandria in Greek; and Mucian, as Tacitus informs us, induced the inhabitants of Antioch, by his persuasive eloquence in the Greek language, (*Græcâ facundiâ*,) to espouse the cause of Vespasian.\*

Greek, then, and not Latin, was really, during the period in question, the language of the Roman empire. Cicero himself sets very tersely and accurately before us the relation subsisting between the two languages, when he tells us, (*Pro Arch. Poet.*, § 23,) “*Græca leguntur in omnibus fere gentibus, Latina suis finibus, exiguis sane, continentur.*” And, if this statement could be made even in his day, with much more emphasis might it have been repeated some generations afterwards.† The Greek language continued rapidly to spread during the century which followed the death of Cicero,‡ and maintained its general supremacy

\* *Cicero in Verrem*, iv., 66; *Val. Max.*, viii., 7, 6; *Dio Cass.*, li., 16; *Tacit.*, “*Hist.*,” ii., 80.

† It has been justly remarked on the above declaration of Cicero, which might, perhaps, in reference to his own times, be charged with some rhetorical exaggeration, “*Sicherlich war diese Verbreitung der griechischen Sprache in der Zeit bis zur Entstehung unserer neuteamentlichen Schriften nur noch allgemeiner geworden.*” — *Credner, Geschichte des Neut. Kanon*, p. 138. *Schlosser*, in his “*Universal-historische Uebersicht der Geschichte der alten Welt und ihrer Cultur*,” referring to the time of Cicero, observes, “*Keiner konnte Ausspruch machen, unter den ersten der Nation zu glänzen, wenn er nicht in die Wissenschaften, welche von den nach Rom strömenden Griechen gelehrt werden, Meister war,*” ii., § 2, p. 538.

‡ *Walpole* in his “*Herculaniensia*,” after noticing (p. 83) the “very great number of manuscripts in the Greek language discovered at Herculaneum,” adds, (p. 86.) respecting Greek at Rome, “that there is rea-



through several ages of the Christian Church. Accordingly, such facts as the following present themselves to us in the literature of the period. The Apostle Paul, as all acknowledge, wrote *to* the Romans in Greek; Clement of Rome wrote *from* that city in Greek; Ignatius, like Paul, addressed the Roman Christians in Greek; Justin Martyr, although long resident in Rome, composed his two Apologies to the Emperor in Greek; and Irenæus wrote from Lyons in Greek on a theme interesting to, and intended to be considered by, the whole Christian world.\*

These facts, with many others of a similar nature which meet us in the literature of the period, are more than enough to prove the general, we might almost say, universal use which was then made of the Greek language. It was one of the few things common to the WHOLE Roman Empire. From the mighty capital

son to conclude that the language was very generally known. The comedies of Menander were in the hands of every one; ‘*solet pueris virginibusque legi*,’ says Ovid,” &c.

\* I should not have thought a single remark necessary in corroboration of any of the above-mentioned facts, had I not found a metropolitan critic of my former work branding as “false” the statement that *Irenæus* wrote in Greek. “The book against heresies,” he says, “exists only in Latin. Irenæus was by birth a Greek, and had to learn Latin and Keltic when he was called to be Bishop of Lyons. Finding that Gnostic doctrines had been introduced there, he warned the people of his diocese against them; he therefore *addressed them in Latin*, and, in his preface, apologised for the barbarous style in which he wrote.”—*Morning Post*, Sept. 19, 1860. My argument may indeed be, as this writer asserts, “an utter failure,” but it will at least probably withstand any such attack. Every scholar knows that the Latin which we possess of the work of Irenæus against heresies is a translation, and that its original language was Greek. The learned *Walchius*, in his elaborate dissertation, “*De Authentia Librorum Irenæi adversus Hæreses*,” (Götting. 1775), observes, “*Græce eos (libros) scriptos esse, nemo nostrâ ætate negabit* ;” and certainly one could scarcely have anticipated that a remark to that effect would have been stigmatised by any would-be critic at the present day as a “false” or erroneous statement.

to the remotest provinces, the tongue of Greece was in every direction employed ; and, while there were numerous vernacular dialects which lingered side by side with it, in the many different countries then forming the vast *orbis Romanus*, it was Greek which furnished a medium of intercourse to the various nations thus politically united,\* and which was especially made use of as the language of commerce, letters, and public instruction.

And now the important question arises—*Is there any reason to suppose that Palestine formed an exception to what has just been stated?* Must we believe that, while Greek was so prevalent, as has been seen, in other parts of the Roman world, there were peculiar causes at work which prevented its introduction into Judæa, or which kept it from being generally known and employed in that country? Unless this can be shewn, the evidence already brought forward to prove that Greek prevailed throughout the Roman Empire at large, as the language of public life, must be held also to prove that it thus prevailed in Palestine ; and that, consequently, just as St Paul naturally wrote to the *Romans* and the *Galatians* in Greek, so the JEWS, if written to at all, would probably be addressed in the same language.

Now, we do find that there were for several generations before Christ special causes at work among the Jews of Palestine, which were certain to have a great effect upon the linguistic condition of that country. But these causes *favoured*, instead of impeding, a

\* "Die griechische Sprache damals in der ganzen gesitteten Welt verbreitet war, und man mit ihr in ganzen Umfange des Römischen Reichs sich verständlich machen konnte."—*Guericke, Neutest. Isagog.*, § 10.

general acquaintance with Greek among the people. It seems almost impossible for any one to consider the national history of the Jews, for a century or two before the commencement of our era, without inferring that Greek *must* have obtained a large ascendancy among them. The several dynasties to which they were successively subject, Egyptian, Syrian, and Roman, all tended to this result. A new wave of Hellenic influence passed over the land with every fresh change which occurred in its political condition. Ptolemy, Antiochus, and Herod, in whatever else they might have differed, were alike certain, by their very supremacy, to contribute to the spread of Grecian usages in Palestine. Nor was this tendency much checked under the Maccabean princes. With the temporary independence then enjoyed by the nation, there was, no doubt, an attempt made to throw off the taint of Gentilism, and to revive the properly Judaic institutions. But Hellenic influence had become too firmly rooted in the land, and the constant use of the Greek language was found too necessary in all national transactions, to allow of any considerable change taking place during the brief period in which Judæa then existed as an independent kingdom. And soon did the hopeless effort to bear up against the encroachments of Gentilism die away. More than half a century before the commencement of our era, (A.C. 63,) did Pompey the Great appear in the land as an arbiter between the two brothers Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, and from that moment Gentile influence revived in greater ascendancy than ever. The government speedily passed from the Asmonæan to the Herodian family: Judæa soon became an acknowledged dependency of

Rome; and, as in other parts of the empire, so in Palestine, the Roman power was the pioneer and the support of Greek civilisation and literature.\*

It deserves also to be remarked, that, besides the influence which could not fail to be exerted among the Jews in favour of the Greek language, by the mere political changes through which they passed, the power of the monarch was at times vigorously put forth in the same direction. Thus we are told (1 Macc. i. 44) that "the king (Epiphanes) sent letters by special messengers to Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, that they should walk after the *strange laws* (νομίμων ἀλλοτρίων) of the land." Again we read (2 Macc. vi. 1, et seqq.) that the same monarch "sent an old man of Athens to compel the Jews to give up the customs of their fathers, and no longer to live according to the laws of God; and also to pollute the temple at Jerusalem, and to name it that of Jupiter Olympius; . . . and there went forth a decree against the Jews, that those of them who would not make the required change to the *Grecian customs* should be put to death." To the same effect, Tacitus informs us that "after the Macedonians obtained the supremacy, king Antiochus used his endeavours to root out the superstitions of the country, and to establish the institutions of the Greeks."† Josephus also relates (Antiq., xiii., 11, 3) respecting Aristobulus the son of Hyrcanus, (circ. 100

\* See *Ewald*, "Geschichte des Volkes Israels," iv., pp. 250-520, for an excellent sketch of the history of the period, shewing the gradual encroachments, and ultimate ascendancy of Gentilism. Compare also *Congb. and Howson*, "Life and Epistles of St Paul," vol. i., p. 29, Orig. Edition.

† "Postquam Macedones præpotuere, rex Antiochus demere superstitionem, et mores Græcorum dare admixus," &c.—*Tacit., Hist.*, v. 8.



A.C.) that he yielded so much to Hellenic influences as to obtain the name of *Φιλέλλην*, "a lover of the Greeks;" and the same writer tells us (*Antiq.*, xiv., 8, 5) of a decree of the people of Athens by which they resolved to confer upon Hyrcanus (who held the priesthood, circ. 45 A.C.) a crown of gold and other honours, for his marked partiality to the Greeks. And still further, Josephus declares respecting Herod the Tetrarch, (that is, Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, and the ruler of Galilee during the public ministry of our Lord,) that "he openly professed himself more friendly to the Greeks than Jews," (*Antiq.*, xix., 7, 3,) and practically demonstrated this sentiment by the whole of his public conduct. We naturally infer from such a persistent course of policy on the part of the rulers of Palestine, that (as in the somewhat analogous case of the Norman supremacy in England\*) the language so favoured by the Court, would gradually encroach upon the ancient vernacular dialect,

\* It may be worth while to quote here a sentence from a mediæval writer (*Rob. Holkotus*, "Dominicanus," circ. A.D. 1350) respecting the conduct of William the Conqueror towards the English, as it seems to furnish quite a parallel to the statements made by Josephus regarding the conduct of Epiphanes towards the Jews: "Narrant historiæ, quod cum Willelmus, Dux Normandorum, regnum Angliæ conquisivisset, deliberavit quomodo linguam Saxoniam posset destruere, et Angliam et Normaniam in idiomate concordare; et ideo ordinavit, quod nullus in curia regis placitaret, nisi in Gallico, et iterum quod puer quilibet ponendus ad literas addisceret Gallicam, et per Gallicam, Latinam, quæ duo usque hodie observantur." Both Antiochus, among the Jews, and William, among the English, seem to have acted in such a way as to justify the remark of *Warton*, who observes, ("Proleg.," i., 19,) "Hoc plerumque evenit ut in victos simul cum imperio victorum lingua derivetur; nec se victores existimant, aut rerum potitos, aut actionum humanarum dominos, nisi et *sermoni* dominantur." The result of this policy in the case of the English was, as *Diodati* expresses it, that "ita sensim prorsus extincta fere lingua Anglicana;" what the result was in the case of the Jews, will be immediately seen.



and would inevitably in process of time become prevalent, not only as the language of refinement, but as that of general public intercourse and instruction.

And this conclusion is amply supported by facts. There are several distinct sources of information open to us in the surviving literature and antiquities of the period; and the result to which these point can hardly be regarded as doubtful. The inscriptions remaining on temples, gates, and other ancient public buildings in Palestine; the numismatic illustrations of the age and country which are available; the inferences to be derived from the *Mischna*, and the still extant works of Philo and Josephus; and, above all, the proofs furnished in the various apocryphal books of the Old Testament, ranging in date from about the beginning of the third century before Christ to perhaps about the year 30 before Christ, seem harmoniously to lead to the same conclusion. That conclusion is, (as, to guard against all misconception, I may be allowed to repeat,) *not* that the Jews of our Saviour's time did not at all employ Hebrew—for evidence to the contrary may be drawn from almost all the sources which have been mentioned—but that they commonly used *both* Greek and Aramaic,—the one language being employed in public intercourse of all kinds, and the other in more domestic and familiar transactions. This is, of course, like previous remarks of the same kind, meant to be only a very general statement as to the relation subsisting between the two languages. From the nature of the case, their respective provinces cannot be defined with perfect strictness. Occasions may easily be conceived, and would doubtless arise, on which the department usually occupied by the one

language would be broken into by the other. We shall find examples of this on proceeding to an examination of the New Testament ; but these, instead of controverting our thesis, serve rather to confirm it. The position laid down in this work is, that *both* languages then existed, and were pretty equally diffused among the people. It is not, therefore, in the least damaging to our views to prove that Aramaic, or modernised Hebrew, was quite commonly employed by the Jews of our Saviour's day, and that it was *sometimes* used by them even on public occasions. Such is exactly one part of the proposition which I am ready to maintain upon the question at issue, while the other part, specially contended for in the treatise, is, that Greek was at least in as common use as Aramaic, and was, except in peculiar circumstances, the language employed for all public and literary purposes.

As introductory to some proofs of this position, to be derived from other sources than the New Testament, I may here submit to the reader the following statements respecting the whole subject, from the works of two most accomplished scholars ; the one belonging to a former, and the other to the present generation. It will thus be seen that, while the views which I venture to uphold have been strongly, and even contemptuously, rejected by many modern biblical critics, they are not without the sanction of some who must be universally respected, both for their great critical acumen, and for their accurate and comprehensive scholarship.

“Wherever,” says Isaac Vossius, “from the times of Alexander the Great, the Greeks had become masters, there also the Greek language obtained ascendancy.

And it would be absurd to reckon Judæa a solitary exception to this rule, when both Josephus and the books of Maccabees sufficiently testify how ready the Jews were, under Greek sovereigns, to adopt Greek customs, so that the greater part of them chose rather to be deemed Greeks than Jews. Nay, even those among them who hated the Greeks, found it necessary, if they wished to be understood, and had any regard to their own interests, to learn the Greek language employed by their rulers. The consequence was, that, as in Egypt, Asia, and the rest of Syria, so likewise in Judæa, no language was heard but the Greek, especially in the cities and towns. Those only who lived in the country and in villages, or belonged to the lowest of the people, made use of Syriac, their vernacular dialect; and even that had, in course of time, become greatly corrupted, so as to be a kind of mongrel Greek. The very synagogues at Jerusalem resounded with nothing else but the tones of the Greek language. And if the sacred Scriptures were first read, a Greek interpretation was added, since none except the learned understood anything of the ancient Hebrew language.”\*

I am not inclined to go quite so far as Vossius here does, in restricting the use of the Aramaic language, at the period in question, almost exclusively to the country districts and villages. There can be no doubt

\* Vossius, “De Sybillinis Oraculis,” cap. xvi. It is a curious fact that Vossius, though writing so strongly as to the prevalence of Greek in Palestine, has nothing but contempt for those who do not believe that St Matthew wrote in *Hebrew*. He expresses himself on this point as follows: “Audio semi-theologos quosdam Rabbīnistas omnium patrum omniumque ecclesiarum testimonia conculcare, ac serio affirmare Mattheum non Hebraice sed Græce scripsisse. Stulti simus, si istiusmodi deliriis aliquid reponamus.”—*Pref. in Append.*, ad lib. de lxx., *Interp.*

that it was also well known in Jerusalem by all ranks of the native population. The following statement of the case by another eminent critic, comes nearer the views which are maintained in this work :—

“Ever since the times of Alexander the Great,” says Credner, “the Jews had emigrated in great numbers from Palestine to Greek countries. In these lands, even the more learned among them, such as Philo, forgot their mother-tongue ; and this happened all the more readily, since, from their sacred books having been translated into the Greek language, provision had thus been made even for their religious necessities. Nevertheless, these Grecian Jews, known as Hellenists, remained in unbroken communion with their native country. Jerusalem was always regarded by the Jews as their capital ; the Sanhedrim of that city was, in all religious points, their highest authority ; and thousands of Greek-speaking Jews travelled annually to Palestine, in order that in the national sanctuary at Jerusalem they might present their supplications, and pay their vows to the Lord who dwelleth in Zion. At the same time, first the Greek and then the Roman conquerors filled the land ; and from the time of Herod, not only were Greek artists and artisans to be seen at work in Palestine, but Greek colonies were also, in no small numbers, to be found. The combined influence of these circumstances had, in the time of Christ, brought about this peculiar condition of things in Palestine, that the Greek language was generally (*ziemlich allgemein*) understood, while the properly Jewish language was understood only by the strictly Jewish inhabitants ; so that one may say, *almost all*



*the dwellers in Palestine understood GREEK, but not all their own vernacular language.*"\*

I may yet add to these extracts, the following remarks from the writings of an eminent scholar among ourselves; and it will be seen both how far recent scholarship has advanced towards the opinion maintained in this work, and also into what apparent inconsistencies it has fallen from allowing *à priori* considerations a predominating influence in some parts of the question. In his work on the Epistles of St Paul, Professor Jowett expresses himself as follows:—"After the establishment of the Greek kingdom of Alexander's successors, Greek became a *familiar* language, not only in Asia and Egypt, but also in Judæa. The Jew in other countries, who spoke and wrote in Greek, was not cut off from intercourse with his Palestine brethren, and new ideas and opinions readily passed from one to the other." This seems almost in exact accordance with the views maintained in this work; but, on the immediately preceding page, we encounter the following seemingly opposite statement—"As persons who have no education imagine that the authorised English

\* *Credner*, "Einl. in das N. T.," § 75. Yet, notwithstanding the above statement as to the prevailing language of Palestine during the period in question, Credner still falls in with the common belief that our Lord and His apostles spoke, for the most part, in *Hebrew*. His reasons are just those commonly alleged, partly *à priori*, and partly the occurrence of Aramaic expressions in the Gospels. He says, § 78, "Ein Griechisch redender Messias war den Palästinensern mehr noch als ein Creuel, war ihnen völlig undenkbar. In der That fehlt es auch nicht an Beispielen, dass Jesus und die Apostel überall wo nicht besondere Anlässe eine Abweichung geboten und rechtfertigen, sich der Hebräischen Sprache bedient haben." The grounds on which the learned writer here rests for the proof of his opinion, that Christ and His disciples usually spoke in Hebrew, will be found fully examined in the following chapters.



version is the original of the Scriptures, so, too, scholars are apt to think and write as though the Greek of the New Testament were the original language in which Christianity was first conceived. But our Lord and His disciples were Galileans, whose *familiar* speech could never have been Greek.\* A different meaning must be assigned to the word "familiar" in these two passages, else they can hardly escape the charge of being in direct opposition to each other. At the same time, there is certainly much truth in the remark made by Professor Jowett as to the manner in which biblical scholars frequently write regarding the Greek of the New Testament, while believing, as he does, that Greek was not the language employed by our Lord and His disciples. This inconsistency will be found noticed and illustrated in the concluding chapter of this work.†

Returning to a consideration of the statements quoted from Vossius and Credner, all the points affirmed by them (with the slight exception already noted) admit, I believe, of satisfactory proof, and most of them, indeed, hardly require any to those who are acquainted with the history of the period. That the conquests of Alexander brought Asia in general under the influence of the Greek literature and language ;‡

\* *Jowett* on the "Epistles of St Paul," vol. i., pp. 451-2, 2d edit.

† See Part ii., Chap. vii.

‡ Plutarch, in referring to the conversation of Alexander with Diogenes, remarks incidentally that it was the great work of the Macedonian conqueror, "τὰ βαρβαρικά τοῖς Ἑλληνικοῖς κεράσαι . . . καὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα σπεῖραι;" and, illustrating how thoroughly this had been done, he declares a little before, in his comparison of Alexander with Plato, that the former had "founded upwards of seventy cities among the barbarians," &c. Jerome, who, from his widely-extended travels, was able to speak from personal knowledge, declares of the Greek, that it was the language which the *whole East* employed, "quo omnis Oriens loquitur."—*Hieron. Præf. in Ep. ad Gal.*

that from the date of the Macedonian supremacy vast numbers of Jews emigrated to Egypt and other Greek-speaking countries ;\* that these Hellenised Jews nevertheless continued in close fellowship with Judæa, and habitually frequented Jerusalem as the metropolis of their religion ;† that numerous colonies of Greeks existed throughout Palestine, and that in many cities the Grecian inhabitants were thoroughly commingled with the native Jews ;‡ that self-interest required the Jews to yield to the Hellenistic influences at work among them, and that multitudes of them were most eager in adopting the Greek customs ;§ that from the time of Alexander the Great the whole land became more and more overrun with Greek settlers and subject to Greek tendencies,||—are all matters too well known to require lengthened proof, or to admit of almost any dispute. And that the result of these, and other co-operating causes, on the language of the country, was in substance as stated above by Vossius and Credner, may, I think, independently of the evidence presented by the New Testament, be made pretty plain from a brief consideration of those sources of evidence which were formerly mentioned.

\* *Joseph. Antiq.*, xii., 1 ; *Philo*, “Cont. Flacc. ;” comp. *Ewald*, “*Gesch. des Volk. Isr.*,” iv., 269.

† *Acts* ii. 7–9 ; *Joseph. Antiq.*, xiv., 7, 2 ; *Bell. Jud.*, v., 3, 1, &c.

‡ *Joseph. Antiq.*, xiii., 9, 2 ; *Bell. Jud.*, ii., 18, 3 ; iii., 9 ; 1 *Macc.* xii. 34, xiv. 34 ; 2 *Macc.* xii. 3, &c.

§ *Joseph. Antiq.*, xii., 5, 1, 4 ; xiii., 11, 3 ; xv., 8, 3 ; 1 *Macc.* i. 12 ; 2 *Macc.* iv. 15, &c. Comp. *Ewald*, iv., 251, and *Jost*, “*Geschichte des Judenthums*,” i., 112.

|| *Joseph. et Macc.* passim. *Ewald* remarks on this point : “Über-sieht man die fast drei Jahrhunderte Griechischen Herrschaft von Alexander's Eroberungszuge an, so erblickt man zuletzt ganz Palästina wie übersaet mit Griechischen Namen von Städten, Örtern und Flüssen,” &c.—*Gesch.*, iv., 265.

The inscriptions still, or recently, existing on ruins in Palestine, so far as they throw any light upon the question, are decidedly favourable to our proposition. They have been collected and exhibited in *fac-simile* by several Oriental travellers, and are found to be far more numerous in *Greek* than in the native dialects of the country. All of them, probably, belong to a somewhat later age than that of Christ; but as the Greek tongue must have been current in the land for a considerable time before it would be employed so largely in public inscriptions, they tend to support the conclusion, reached on other and independent grounds, in favour of the prevalence of that language.\*

The numismatic evidence is more certain and satisfactory. Not a few Palestinian coins are still extant belonging to our Lord's times, or a little earlier or later, and these almost all bear *Greek* inscriptions. The eminent numismatist, Mr Akerman, describes eight different coins as belonging to Herod the Great, or his son Archelaus, and these all, without exception,

\* *Hug's* "Introduction," Part ii., § 10. In the work of Rob. Wood, (London, 1753,) entitled, "The Ruins of Palmyra, otherwise Tedmor in the Desert," there are *twenty-six* Greek inscriptions, with *one* Latin, and *thirteen* Palmyrene. Seetzen collected sixty-nine inscriptions, all of which, with one exception, were Greek. The accurate Burckhardt, in his "Travels in Syria," (London, 1823,) also exhibits a great variety of inscriptions in Greek, and still more have been collected by later travellers in Palestine. Quite recently I observed the following statement, copied from a literary journal: "At a late meeting of the Jerusalem Literary Society, Mr Cyril Graham described his recent travels far east of the Jordan. . . . In all these regions are ancient cities in abundance, hitherto unvisited, and in excellent condition, with *Greek* inscriptions, or *occasionally* a Palmyrene or a Cufic variety among them." See also "Greek Inscriptions from Syria and the Hauran, discovered by the Rev. J. L. Porter, M.A.," London, 1855; and compare the same author's "Five Years in Damascus," vol. i., 65, 234, 268; ii., 37, 202, &c.

have Greek superscriptions. The same is true of the coins of Herod Antipas and of Philip the Tetrarch, which are described by the same writer.\* Now, no adequate reason can be assigned for coins inscribed in Greek being so commonly in circulation among the Jews of our Saviour's day, except that that was then the prevailing language of the country. There seems no ground for imagining that the custom, prevalent among the nations of modern Europe, of inscribing their coins or monuments with Latin, instead of the vernacular languages, had any equivalent practice among the nations of antiquity. The language of the country appears always to have been used, except when the imperial domination of a foreign power was to be indicated. Hence Spanheim attaches so much importance to the legends on ancient coins in questions of ancient philology.† Supposing, then, we admit the genuineness, so much discussed, of the Maccabean shekels, which were perhaps also in circulation in the time of Christ, a good reason is found for the mottoes which they bear, in the fact that these exhibit in Samaritan characters the ancient vernacular language of the country. And when we find that one of the

\* *Akerman's* "Numismatic Illustrations of the New Testament." See also, for further examples, *Diodati*, pars ii., cap. i., § 2; and *Spanheim's* great work, "De Præstantia et Usu Numismatum Antiquorum," vol. i., diss. viii., 9.

† He remarks that by the study of ancient coins, "et indubiæ linguarum origines, ac subinde mutatæ dein literarum formationes . . . feliciter eruuntur."—*Ut sup.*, vol. i., diss. ii., 1. Dr Pfannkuche accounts in his own way for the undoubted fact, that most of the Palestinian coins of the period bore Greek inscriptions, by saying, "Probably the masters of the coinage were Greeks, and found coins with regular Grecian *uncial* letters more beautiful than the oriental figures to which they were accustomed."—*Pf.* on the "Language of Palestine," p. 20 of English translation.



commonest coins of Judæa in our Lord's days bore a *Latin* inscription, a sufficient explanation of this is at once supplied in the imperial sovereignty of Rome. But when we discover that by far the greater number of the coins then circulating in Palestine bore *Greek* inscriptions, it seems impossible to give any satisfactory account of this fact, except what is furnished in the supposition, that Greek was really then the prevailing language of the country.

The *Mischna*—the most ancient and trustworthy of the Rabbinical writings—also contains some statements which tell in favour of our argument. Its compilation was begun by the Rabbi Judah about the middle of the second century, and was completed some fifty or eighty years afterwards by his disciples. The object of this work was to preserve from perishing the maxims and decisions of former Rabbis; so that the substance of part of it doubtless belongs to a date anterior to the birth of Christ. Among its statutes, we find one of Simeon the son of Gamaliel, to the effect that it was not allowable for the Jews to compose books “except in the *Greek* language.” Again, we read that a bill of divorcement might be written and signed either in *Greek* or Hebrew, and was equally valid whether the one language or the other was employed. We also read, in accordance with what we might infer from some passages in Josephus, that the study and employment of the Greek language were formally prohibited in the course of the war conducted by Vespasian and Titus.\* These and some other statements contained

\* *Surenhusius*, “*Misch. Tract. Megill.*,” c. 1, § 8; “*Gittim*,” c. 9, § 8; “*Sotah*,” c. 9, § 14. The principal treatises of the “*Mischna*” were published in an English version by *De Sola* and *Raphall*, (London, 1845.)



in this ancient Jewish collection, though no great importance is to be attached to them, seem to harmonise with and support our proposition.

The works of Philo bear directly on our argument, only as shewing how thoroughly familiar with Greek were the extra-Palestinian Jews of our Saviour's times. The purity and elegance of Philo's style have always been greatly admired. It is so free from all Hebrew colouring, and so truly classical and correct, that it used to be said of old, "Either Plato writes in the manner of Philo, or Philo in that of Plato"—(*ἢ Πλάτων φιλωνίζει, ἢ Φίλων πλατωνίζει*.—*Photius, Bib. Græc.*, p. 151.) This author was born about the year 20 B.C., and with all his learning, and zeal for the institutions of his country, seems to have been almost entirely ignorant of the Hebrew language. His works bear conclusive evidence of this, and shew very strikingly how completely Hellenised the Jews of Egypt had become; while, if we remember how closely connected these still remained with their native country, we are also led inferentially to the conclusion, so abundantly substantiated on other grounds, that the Greek language must then have been well known in Palestine.\*

in which see pp. 303, 341. For reasons afterwards stated, I do not lay great stress on the remarks made by Rabbinical writers respecting the point in question. I may, however, quote here the statement of *Lightfoot*, who was so familiarly acquainted with this field of literature. "The Jews," he says, referring to the early Rabbis, "do well near acknowledge the Greek for their mother-tongue even in Judæa."—*Lightfoot's Works*, by *Pitman*, vol. xi., 25.

\* Comp. *Renan*, "Histoire des Langues Sémitiques," p. 158, first edit., or p. 166, second edit. Dr Pfannkuche asserts, (p. 83 of the English translation,) that Philo was familiar with Aramaic; also, (p. 14,) that the Egyptian Jews contemporary with Josephus spoke that language; and still further, (p. 39,) that the Alexandrine version was made, not from the Hebrew original, but from very ancient Targums! Well might an

If Philo has been compared to Plato, Josephus as been styled the Jewish Livy. His works are written with great care, on the model of the classical authors, and are extremely valuable in all that relates to the elucidation of the history and antiquities of his country. They furnish many important contributions to our argument. Several passages have already been incidentally referred to, and more will afterwards be quoted; but we must here notice somewhat more particularly the direct evidence in favour of our proposition which may be derived from the writings of the great Jewish historian.

Josephus, as a man of eminent learning, was undoubtedly far better acquainted with the ancient Hebrew than were the great majority of his countrymen. In a well-known passage, (*Antiq.*, xx., 11, 2,) he expressly claims this superiority, and speaks of it as a thing which was freely conceded by his contemporaries. "Those of my own nation," he says, "willingly acknowledge that I far exceed them in the learning belonging to the Jews." Yet, with all this, it is certain that his knowledge of the Hebrew tongue was by no means profound or accurate.\* And it is also certain that, in his references to the Old Testament, he makes more habitual use of the Alexandrine version than of the

eminent German scholar recently remark, "Bei De Rossi wie bei Pfannkuche, finden sich manche unrichtige und übertriebene Behauptungen, was das Verhältniss des Aramäischen zum Griechischen betrifft."—*Bleek, Einl. in das Alt. Test.*, p. 51. Berlin, 1860.

\* Referring to the ignorance of ancient Hebrew which is betrayed by both Philo and Josephus, *Renan* remarks, "Les explications qu'ils donnaient de certains mots hebreux dépassent les plus étranges hallucinations des anciens en fait d'étymologie."—*Histoire des Langues Sémitiques*, ut sup.

original text.\* These facts shew how dependent the Jews of our Saviour's time were upon the Greek translation of the LXX., and how general its use was even among those who were to some extent acquainted with the tongue in which the sacred Scriptures were originally composed.

We find Josephus referring to many places in Judæa which bore Greek names, or both Greek and Hebrew—a thing to be expected, if the relation between the two languages was such as is here supposed. Thus, in reference to the Holy City itself, he mentions many such names as the following as belonging to places within it,—*Γυναικεῖοι πύργοι*, (Wars, v., 2, 2,) *Κολυμβήθρα Ὀφεων*, (Ib., v., 3, 2,) *Ἰππικός πύργος*, (Ib., v., 3, 5,) *Ξυστὸς πύργος*, (Ib., v., 4, 2,) &c.† It is plain from several passages, as, for instance, the last quoted, that Josephus did not *translate* these names, but gave them in the form in which they were current among the inhabitants, for he preserves side by side with them Hebrew names, such as Bethso and Gennath, untranslated. Some places seem to have been equally known by a

\* *Fritzsche* observes on this point, "Joseph. ist mehr von der LXX. als vom hebr. T. abhängig," and refers in confirmation to the treatises of *Spittler* and *Scharfenberg* on the subject. *Hertzog's* "Real-Encyclopædie," Art. Alexandrinische Bibelübersetzung. To the same effect, *De Wette* remarks respecting the Septuagint, "Philo benutzt sie allein, und selbst Josephus macht von ihr mehr als vom hebräischen Texte Gebrauch."—*Einf. in das A. T.*, § 43. Even *Gesenius* simply claims some knowledge of ancient Hebrew for Josephus, saying, "Ausser seiner aramäischen Muttersprache wird man ihm auch einige althebräische Sprachkenntniß nicht streitig machen können, indessen fehlt es ihm, wie den Alexandrinern, vornehmlich an etymologischer Kenntniß, an Genauigkeit und Gründlichkeit, vorzüglich grammatischer Art."—*Gesch. der Hebr. Spr.*, § 23. For examples of the etymological and other blunders committed by Josephus, see *Gesenius*, loc. cit.

† Comp. *Ewald*, "Gesch. des Volk. Isr.," iv., 266, &c.; and *Porter*, "Greek Inscriptions," &c., p. 25.

Greek and Hebrew appellation, so that, in referring to them, Josephus uses either form indifferently, as in the case of Bezetha, a district of Jerusalem, which, he tells us, (Wars, ii., 19, 4,) was also called *Κοινόπολις*.\* All this points to the familiar and constant use of the Greek language.

Josephus also reports many speeches and conversations which seem necessarily to imply the habitual use of the Greek language in Palestine. The highest and lowest in the country are spoken of in such a way as leaves the impression that they all understood and employed it. We find it stated that the decrees of Julius Cæsar were ordered to be published at Jerusalem, as at other places, in Latin and Greek letters, (Antiq., xiv., 10, 3.) Josephus himself manifestly spoke to Vespasian in the Greek language, (Wars, iii., 8, 9.) The Jews apparently held such direct intercourse with the Roman soldiers during the siege of Jerusalem, as to imply that they conversed in a language common to both; and that could be no other than Greek, (Wars, v., 3, 3, 4; v., 7, 4; v., 13, 2.) It may be inferred from the last chapter of the Antiquities, (Antiq., xx., 11, 2,) that the very *slaves* among the Jews then had access to a thorough acquaintance with the Greek, and that, on account of the commonness of the accomplishment, it was undervalued by those who aimed at a high reputation.† It seems even that a mere boy

\* In like manner St John speaks in his Gospel (xix. 13) of "the place called *Λιθόστρωτος*, but in the Hebrew, 'Gabbatha.'" Comp. also ver. 17.

† Such is the inference, and it seems a fair one, which *Wiseman* in his "*Horæ Syriacæ*" derives from the passage. His words are, "*Josephi temporibus, etiam servi linguam Græcam callebant.*"—*Hor. Syr.*, p. 71.



was able to negotiate with the Roman soldiery without the aid of any interpreter, (*Wars*, vi., 6, 1;) and this could have been done only by their common employment of the Greek language.

In what language, let us next inquire, were those many speeches of Herod the Great delivered, which are recorded by Josephus? Not to mention other considerations, there is especially this one, which seems to shew that it must have been Greek. We know that Herod was extremely solicitous to introduce foreign practices into Judæa, (*Jos.*, *Antiq.*, xv., 8; *Ib.*, xvi., 5;) and that being the case, he is not likely to have continued to employ in his public addresses the old vernacular language. He seems, in fact, to have gone the utmost lengths compatible with safety, in the efforts which he made to plant and nurture Greek customs among his subjects. He had games established in the country in imitation of the famous Olympian contests, (*Antiq.*, xvi., 5, 1,) built cities to which he gave Greek names, (*Ib.*, § 2,) and shewed, in all respects, such a leaning towards the Gentile culture and habits, that the historian, in summing up his character, declares, (*Ib.*, § 4,) that, while he was ever harsh towards his own countrymen, he was kind and liberal to foreigners. Now, with such strong Hellenic tendencies, it can hardly be supposed that Herod would encourage by his example the continued use of the national tongue, or that the many speeches attributed to him by Josephus, (*Antiq.*, xv., 5, 3; xvi., 4, 6, &c.,) were delivered in any other than the Greek language. Respecting one of these, at least, it seems there can be no doubt as to the language employed. We are informed by Josephus, (*Antiq.*, xvii., 5,) that Quinctilian Varus, the Roman Governor



of Syria, was present in Jerusalem at the trial of Herod's son, Antipater, and took a direct and important part in the proceedings. The speeches then made by Herod, Varus, Nicolaus of Damascus, and Antipater, were evidently delivered in a language *common* to the several speakers, as well as the whole assembly,—of course, therefore, in the Greek language.

The same conclusion must, I believe, be reached, respecting the speech of Archelaus at Jerusalem on his accession, (*Antiq.*, xvii., 8, 4;) of the Jews at Ptolemais, in addressing the Roman Governor, (*Ib.*, xviii., 8, 2;) of Petronius at Tiberias, in reply to the representations of the Jews, (*Ib.*, xviii., 8, 5;) of Herod Agrippa to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, (*Wars*, ii., 16, 4;) and of Simon to the people of Scythopolis, (*Ib.*, ii., 18, 4.) If it be possible to question our statement with respect to some of these cases, it seems quite impossible in regard to others. It must be plain that when a Roman magistrate held direct intercourse with the people of Judæa, as Petronius is said to have done, that could only be by means of their common employment of Greek; and it is also perfectly evident that, when Simon addressed the inhabitants of Scythopolis—a well-known Greek city—he necessarily made use of the Greek language.

These, then, are some proofs, which may be collected from Josephus, in support of the proposition of this work. Further references to various passages in the same author will be made as we proceed; and we shall also have occasion to notice, in a subsequent chapter, some statements in his writings, which are generally referred to as opposed to those views which it is the design of this work to establish.

It only remains now that, before proceeding to the New Testament itself, we glance at the important evidence in our favour which is afforded by the Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament.\* Much uncertainty rests on the questions as to where, when, and by whom, these books were severally composed. But it is almost certain that the latest of them was written before the commencement of our era, while the others range, at uncertain dates, from that period up to perhaps the third century before Christ.

Now, it at once strikes us as a suggestive fact connected with these books that they *exist only in Greek*. One of them, we know, was at first written in Hebrew, but the original was soon replaced by a translation. Another one is generally believed to have been composed in Hebrew ; but of it, too, all traces of the supposed original have perished. Some of the rest are conjectured by critics to have been partly written in Greek, and partly in the ancient tongue of Palestine ; but of all, without exception, it holds true that only in their Greek form were they generally known to the Jews of old, and only in that form are they known to us at the present day.

In this consideration, there seems an argument

\* I include under this title the books which are enumerated in the sixth Article of the Church of England, viz. :—The Third Book of Esdras, The Fourth Book of Esdras, The Book of Tobias, the Book of Judith, The rest of the Book of Esther, The Book of Wisdom, Jesus the Son of Sirach, Baruch the Prophet, The Song of the Three Children, The Story of Susanna, Of Bel and the Dragon, The Prayer of Manasses, The First Book of Maccabees, The Second Book of Maccabees. The other writings sometimes spoken of as belonging to the Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament, and collected by *Fabricius* in his “*Codex Pseudepigraphus Veteris Testamenti*,” do not here fall under our notice, as, with a few doubtful exceptions, they were all composed since the commencement of the Christian era.

which will weigh much with every unprejudiced mind in the controversy respecting the prevailing language of Palestine in the time of Christ. The Jewish LITERATURE was then *Greek*. Writings intended for the people, and commonly current among them, were composed in the Greek language. Of that fact, the most cursory glance at the Apocrypha is sufficient to convince us ; and the impression thus made in favour of the general employment of Greek in Palestine for several generations before Christ, is strengthened when we look a little more particularly at the several books.\*

The Third Book of Esdras (First in English) is deemed by some a translation from the Hebrew ; the Fourth Book (Second in English) is universally allowed to have been composed in Greek. It is certain, respecting the former, that it was current in Greek during the first century before Christ. Josephus makes use of it in several places (comp. *Antiq.*, xi., 2, with chap. ii., 16, seq.; and *Antiq.*, x., 4, 5, with chap. i., 1, seq. ; ) and although we have not such sure evidence of the early existence of the Fourth Book, the probability is that

\* A useful synopsis of the Jewish literature belonging to this period is given by *Westcott* in his "Introduction to the Gospels," London, 1860, pp. 83, 84. The dates of several books, which he assigns to the first or second centuries before Christ, are very doubtful. But to whatever period such writings as the Apocalypse of Henoeh, or the Psalms of Solomon, may be ascribed, there is no adequate reason to doubt that they were originally composed in Greek. See *Fabricius*, "Cod. Pseudepigr.," p. 179, and p. 915 ; *Hertzog's* "Real-Encyc.," Art. Henoeh, &c. As a mere expression of opinion, and, without assigning it the character of testimony, to which it has no claim, I may here observe that the Syriac Bishop, "George of the Gentiles," in seeking to account for the omission of *the three kings* in the genealogy of our Lord contained in the Greek Gospel of St Matthew, makes the following, among other remarks, that, at the period in question, "*Hebræorum plerique Græco sermone utebantur.*" See the passage, as quoted from Dionysius Bar-Salibi, in *Asseman*. "Bib. Orient.," ii., pp. 160-1.

it was composed before the days of our Saviour. Both works seem to have been written by Jews of Palestine.

The Book of Tobit dates about the Maccabean period—a little earlier or later. It is agreed by all that its author could be no other than a Jew of Palestine. On this account solely, the originality of the existing Greek has been denied by some critics.\* But this denial manifestly springs from a preconceived opinion as to the language in which alone a Jew of Palestine would write. Other critics have impugned the originality of the Greek, on the ground of mistakes which they fancy they have discovered as committed by the supposed translator.† But the truth is, there is no evidence worth speaking of, either internal or external, to shew that the work, as we now have it, is a translation; and the conclusion of the most recent criticism is, that, though written by a Jew of Palestine, and for the natives of that country, it was undoubtedly composed in Greek.‡

The Book of Judith is dated by Ewald about 130 before Christ; while other writers, such as De Wette, building on the circumstance that it is first plainly referred to by Clement of Rome, (Ep. ad Cor., cap. 55,) assign it a somewhat later date. All admit that it was written by a Jew of Palestine. Some critics, such

\* *Dr Davidson*, in *Horne's* "Introduction," ii., p. 998.

† *De Wette*, "Einl. in das Alt. Test.," p. 456.

‡ See especially, on the whole subject of the Apocryphal Books, the following work, "Kurtzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zu den Apokryphen des Alten Testaments. Bearbeitet von *Dr O. F. Fritzsche*, und *Dr W. Grimm*," Leipzig, 1851-60. In the brief remarks made above on the several books, I beg to be understood as stating with great diffidence my own conclusions in regard to the obscure questions connected with the Apocrypha. The great unquestionable fact is, that *Greek* was the language in which, almost exclusively, these books were known of old among the Jews.



as Fritzsche and Davidson, have deemed the existing Greek a translation from the Hebrew, while others, such as Eichhorn and Jahn, maintain its originality. There seems no sufficient reason to doubt that it was composed in the language in which we still possess it. At all events, a necessity was soon felt for translating it into Greek, for it is certain that the existing work is nearly as old as the supposed Hebrew original.\*

The Apocryphal additions to the Book of Esther were beyond all question originally composed in Greek. De Rossi's fanciful hypothesis regarding them has long been exploded; and the opinion of Scholz that they are a translation from the Hebrew or Aramaic, has no supporters. It is doubtful when or where they were composed, but it appears from the writings of Josephus, (*Antiq.*, xi., 6, 1, seq.,) that he was acquainted with them.

The Book of Wisdom must be assigned to the second century before Christ, although neither Philo nor Josephus refers to it. There is a decided allusion to it in Clement of Rome, (*Ep. ad Cor.*, cap. 27, compared with *Wisd.*, chap. xi. 22, and xii. 12.) No critic doubts the originality of the Greek text; and there is little, except a prejudice on the subject of its language, to support the prevailing opinion that it was written by a Jew of Alexandria, and not of Palestine.†

\* It has been supposed that, in this book as in others, there are marks of mistranslation from the Hebrew; but the great reason which has weighed with some in deeming it a translation is suggested in these words of *De Wette*: "Wirklich *muss* das Original in der Sprache Palästina's geschrieben gewesen seyn."—*Eint.*, p. 451.

† *Dr Davidson* says, in the style usually employed on such questions, "The writer was not a Palestinian Jew of the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, else he would not have written in Greek but in Hebrew."—*Horne's Introduction*, ii., p. 1017.

The Wisdom of the Son of Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus, was undoubtedly at first composed in *Hebrew*. This much is stated in the prologue to the existing work ; but it is doubtful whether the ancient or modern Hebrew is intended. For several reasons, I assign to the term *Εβραιστί*, employed by the translator, the same meaning which it bears in the New Testament, and believe the work to have been written at first in Aramaic. The date of the original writing was, probably, about the end of the third century before Christ. But, though this book was composed in Hebrew, the grandson of the author found it expedient, some half century afterwards, to translate it into Greek ; and the translation henceforth superseded the original. Both the original author and the translator were Jews of Palestine.

The Book of Baruch is generally admitted to have been written partly, at least, in Greek. But some critics have imagined that there are marks of two different authors in it ; and have argued that, as the first section was probably written in Palestine, it must have been composed in the Hebrew language. This is a mere assumption, as is also the opinion that the other section was written at Alexandria. The whole book was probably composed in Palestine.

The Song of the Three Children ; The Story of Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon ; The Prayer of Manasseh ; and the Letter of Jeremiah, are admitted by the most recent critics to have been composed in Greek.\* These writings, probably, all belong to the first or second century before Christ ; and if some of

\* See *Fritzsche* and *Grimm*, ut sup., Erste Lieferung.

them were composed in Egypt, all seem to have been current in Palestine.

Looking, now, at the First and Second Books of Maccabees, we find still more clear and decisive evidence of the prevalence of Greek in Palestine before the days of Christ. It is not necessary to enter here into the disputed question as to whether or not the first book was originally written in Hebrew. Admitting, in the face of some manifest difficulties, that it was so,\* we know for certain that both books were current among the Jews in their present form during the century which preceded the birth of our Saviour. And it must surely be conceded by all, that the intercourse which the first book narrates as having been carried on between the Jews and the *Lacedæmonians*, was conducted in Greek. At chap. xii. 5-18, we find a copy of a letter which Jonathan, the high priest of the Jews, wrote to the Spartans; and at ver. 19-23 of the same chapter, we have a copy of the answer returned by Oniases, king of the Lacedæmonians. Again, at chap. xiv. 16-23, we have an account of another communication received from the Spartans, and respecting which it is expressly said that "it was read in the presence of the church at Jerusalem." No hint is given of any interpreter being employed on these occasions, or of the least interpretation being requisite; so that we naturally

\* *Grimm*, while deciding that the book is a translation from the Hebrew, acknowledges one of these difficulties, when he remarks that the Septuagint, and not the original Hebrew, is followed in the quotations from the Old Testament which occur in it, *e.g.*, at chap. vii. 9: "Diese Abhängigkeit," he says, "des Buchs von den LXX. konnte einen Augenblick geneigt machen den griechischen Text des Buchs für das Original zu halten." See *ut sup.*, dritt. Lief., xv.

infer that the Jewish people were quite familiar with the Greek language. That this was the case appears from several other considerations which the book suggests. It cannot, I believe, be even plausibly denied that Greek was then the language of that portion of the great kingdom of Syria which lay next to Palestine. I am aware, indeed, that it is not uncommon to meet, in the writings of eminent scholars, with expressions which seem to imply that they suppose Aramaic to have been the prevailing language of Antioch and the adjacent region, under Alexander's successors. But, for many reasons, I humbly conceive this opinion to be mistaken. The dynasty of the Seleucidæ is expressly denominated, in the eighth chapter of this book, (ver. 18,) "the kingdom of the Greeks," (τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν Ἑλλήνων;) and it will surely be admitted that Greeks spoke the Greek language.\* We know, moreover, that these Greek princes, from Seleucus Nicator downwards, were keen supporters of Greek literature and usages, and took every means of extending and establishing these among their subjects.† It can scarcely be doubted, therefore, that Greek was the language employed by those sol-

\* *Tacitus* makes an observation which clearly shews that Greek was the language of the inhabitants of Antioch. Speaking of Mucian, a partisan of Vespasian, he remarks, (Hist., ii., 80,) "Tum Antiochen-sium theatrum ingressus, ubi illis consultare mos est, concurrentes, et in adulationem effusos adloquitur; satis decorus etiam Græcâ facundiâ, omniumque quæ diceret atque ageret, arte quâdam ostentator." *Josephus* (Bell. Jud., ii., 13, 7, compared with ii., 14, 4) uses the terms Συροὶ and Ἕλληνες as convertible.

† *Vaillant*, in his work entitled "Seleucidarum imperium, sive Historia regum Syriæ, ad fidem numismatum accommodata," observes respecting the founder of the kingdom of Syria (B.C. 312), "Seleucus Nicator, Syriâ occupatâ, in eâ dominationis sedem meditans, non solum ut tradidit Appianus, plurima nomina Græca urbibus Syriæ imposuit,



diers who were stationed by Antiochus Epiphanes, and others, in the tower of Jerusalem. And this being granted, its common use by the inhabitants of Palestine is a manifest and necessary consequence. We find it stated in this book, (chap. vi., 21-27,) that some of the heathen soldiers in Jerusalem were joined by a number of the Jews, and betook themselves to King Antiochus, in whose presence these apostate Israelites urged the importance of immediate steps being taken for the preservation of the king's supremacy in Palestine. Much the same thing is again narrated at chap. vii. 5, 6; the employment of the Greek language by the Jews being evident on both occasions. But still more decisive of the point in question is the account contained in chap. x. 1-8. Demetrius, king of Syria, being threatened on his throne by the impostor, Alexander, sent letters to Jerusalem to secure the friendship of the governor, Jonathan, in view of the conflict which lay before him. These letters were unquestionably written in Greek; and let the reader mark what is said regarding them. "And Jonathan," we are told, (ver. 7,) "came to Jerusalem, and read the letters in the ears of *all the people, and of them belonging to the tower.*" The obvious meaning of these words, is, that the letters of Demetrius were read *at the same time* in the hearing of a promiscuous multitude of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and of those Gentile soldiers who had

sed et linguam Græcam populis communicavit, et in publicis monumentis usurpare jussit," p. 109. Comp. *Norisius*, "Annus et Epochæ Syro-Macedonum in vetustis urbium Syriæ nummis præsertim Medicæis expositæ," Diss. i., cap. 3; and see on the whole subject, *Diodati*, ut sup., pars i., cap. i., prop. 3. In the above remarks, I refer, of course, only to Syria *cis Euphratem*

been stationed among them. No interpreter was employed on either side ; the epistles of the king were equally intelligible to both parties ; and this being so, the inference is surely irresistible, that the dwellers in Jerusalem were then thoroughly familiar with the Greek language.

Not less evident is the proof of this fact to be derived from several passages in the Second Book of Maccabees. There can be no reasonable doubt that this book, as a whole, was written in Greek.\* Some critics, under the influence of that prejudice which has so largely prevailed with respect to the language of Palestine at the time, have maintained that the two epistles prefixed were first written in Hebrew,† but without a shadow of evidence. These were undoubtedly composed, like the rest of the book, in the language in which they still exist, and thus of themselves bear the strongest testimony to the wide acquaintance with Greek which was then possessed in Palestine. The same thing strikingly appears from some passages which contain allusions to the ancient vernacular language of the country. In the seventh chapter, we have a remarkable account of the heroic conduct of a mother and her seven sons, when subjected to torture in the presence of Antiochus Epiphanes. Mention is again and again made in the narrative, of the sufferers having made use of their own national tongue in addressing each other, while, at the same time, it is evident that they also understood and employed Greek. At ver. 21, we are told,

\* *Grimm* remarks, ut sup., "Das Buch gibt sich auf den ersten Blick als griechisch Original zu erkennen."

† *Dr Davidson*, in *Horne's* "Introduction," ii., p. 1050.

respecting the mother, that, full of the noblest courage, she exhorted each of her sons, "in their native tongue," to suffer patiently; and, at ver. 24, we read that the king, not understanding the language which was used, and suspecting that it was meant to mock his power, put forth his utmost efforts to win over to his purpose the youngest brother, who still remained alive. And then, at ver. 26, we find the mother addressed by the monarch, evidently in Greek; but only replying to his exhortation by again appealing to her son (ver. 27) in "the native tongue;" while, at ver. 31-38, we read of the young man directly addressing the king in words of severe rebuke and resolute defiance. Some writers have argued from this, and similar passages in the book, (chap. xii. 37, xv. 29,) as if they furnished proof that Greek was still unknown in the country, and that the ancient vernacular tongue only was employed.\* It seems marvellous that such an argument should ever have been used. These very passages suggest to the reader that the employment of Hebrew was exceptional, and thus rather tend to support than subvert our proposition. It is manifest that both the mother and her sons whose courage is celebrated in the seventh chapter were *bilinguals*; for, while they spoke between themselves in Hebrew, they also addressed Antiochus in Greek. The whole book, in short, bears unmistakeable evidence of the sway then possessed by Hellenic

\* See, for example, *Greswell*, "Dissertations on the Gospels," iii., p. 335. If this learned writer means to deduce from the passage simply what Dr Pfannkuche infers from it, "that the national Aramaic was not *extinguished* in Palestine by the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes," (p. 23 of Eng. trans.) then, of course, his argument is not in any way opposed to the views maintained in this work.

influence in Palestine. No one can read it, in a spirit of candour, without being convinced, as the writer himself declares, that "a kind of acme of Hellenism" (*ἀκμή τις Ἑλληνισμοῦ*, chap. iv. 13) had then been reached in the land; and that, in accordance with this state of things, the people generally had become quite familiar with the Greek language.

Our way is now prepared for entering on an examination of the New Testament itself. And what has been said in the preceding pages, may at least avail somewhat to shake that prejudice, which so generally prevails, against the opinion, that Greek was the language usually employed by our Lord and His disciples. The reader will carry, I trust, from the perusal of this chapter, a disposition to deal fairly with whatever evidence may be produced in favour of our assertion. And all I request is, that the matter be judged, not by prepossession, but proof. Let us proceed to look with an impartial eye into the New Testament itself, and inquire, with a simple desire to know the truth, what evidence it bears, both in its general texture, and its special intimations, as to the language which was commonly made use of by our Saviour and His apostles.



### CHAPTER III.

PROOF FROM A GENERAL SURVEY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT THAT GREEK WAS THE PREVAILING LANGUAGE OF PALESTINE IN THE TIMES OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.

WE now proceed to what has been announced as the principal object contemplated in the first part of this work—the production of proof from the New Testament itself, that Greek was the dominant language of Judæa at the commencement of our era, and was consequently the language, for the most part, made use of by our Lord and His disciples. Several distinct lines of argument here present themselves. Some of these are more general, and others more specific, but all will be found converging to the same conclusion. They will engage our attention in this and the four succeeding chapters ; and, in the first place, we propose to consider the evidence in our favour which may be derived from *a general survey of the whole New Testament*.

In entering on this part of the argument, I may begin by remarking, that the *primâ facie* evidence—that which results from a comprehensive survey of the New Testament from a purely literary point of view

—is undeniably in favour of our proposition. For, let the simple facts of the case be considered. Here we possess, in the volume known as the New Testament, a collection of writings, composed for the most part *by* Jews of Palestine, and primarily intended to some extent *for* Jews of Palestine, and all of them written (if only we leave out of sight, in the meantime, the disputed original of St Matthew's Gospel) in the *Greek* language.\* Now, what is the natural inference? Is it not that Greek must have been well known both to the writers and their readers, and that *it* was deemed the most fitting language, at the time, in which for Jews of Palestine both to impart and receive instruction? Such at least is the conclusion which would instantly be reached from the existence of similar facts in any other case. When we find that an ancient writer addressed his countrymen at large in a particular language, we naturally infer that both he and they were familiar with that language; and that it was chosen by him as the most suitable vehicle for conveying to them what he desired to communicate.

And why should we not draw the same inference with respect to the writers and readers of the books of the New Testament? When we find the Galilean Peter taking up his pen and writing in Greek, why should we not suppose that Greek was quite familiar to the inhabitants of Galilee? And when we find the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews writing to *the Jews*

\* This statement as to the original language of the various books of the New Testament will scarcely, at the present day, be disputed. The attempts made by Hardouin to shew that Latin was the original language of several books,—by Bertholdt, to prove that some were composed in Syro-Chaldaic,—and by Michaelis, to establish the Hebrew original of at least the Epistle to the Hebrews—are now universally

of *Palestine*\* in Greek, how can we escape from the conclusion that they generally understood that language? It is the weakest of all arguments to attempt to set aside this inference, by replying that the Epistle in question was intended for the benefit of the whole Christian world, and was on that account written in Greek, and not in the ordinary language of those to whom it was primarily addressed. We may willingly admit the universal, as well as particular, design of the Epistle; we may gratefully acknowledge that it is fraught with most valuable lessons for Christians in our own and in every age, no less than for the Christians of Palestine in the early days of the Church. But still, we cannot forget that it was to the Palestinian believers of those days it was specially inscribed; that it was for their benefit, in particular, it was ostensibly written; and, keeping these facts in view, we cannot suppose that, however wide the field which its divinely-inspired contents might afterwards enrich, or however lasting might prove its value to the whole Christian Church, it was originally composed in a language with which its first readers were not well acquainted, and that thus their interests, while professedly sought, were in reality cruelly and mockingly disregarded, for the sake of others.

Two questions, then, instantly arise on the point under consideration, as soon as we give even the most

admitted to have been failures; and the Greek original of the whole New Testament (excepting only St Matthew's Gospel) is as universally acknowledged. Comp. *Credner*, "Gesch. des N. T. Kanon," pp. 137-8; and *Maltby's* Sermon, entitled "The Original Greek of the New Testament Asserted and Vindicated," London, 1825.

\* This point is taken for granted in the meantime; it will be found fully discussed afterwards, in Chapter VI. of this work.

cursorily glance at the contents of the New Testament ; and which seem to admit of only one answer. The first question is—How *could* Palestinian Jews, like Peter, James, and John,—“unlettered and ignorant men,” as they were styled by their own countrymen—men certainly possessed of no advantages, either of rank or education, above the respectable labouring classes in Judæa,—*have written in Greek*, unless that were the language which men even in the humblest station naturally employed ? And the second question is—How could it have been supposed by these writers, that they would be *understood* by their countrymen in and beyond Palestine, while they wrote in Greek, unless it had been assumed that that was a language with which *all* Jews were then more or less familiar ?

There is only one mode of escaping from the conclusion which follows from the first of these questions, and it has been had recourse to by some of the very strenuous upholders of the prevalence of Hebrew at this time in Palestine. It is implied in the following words of Greswell, in his learned and laborious work upon the Gospels : “If the Greek alone,” he says, “would have sufficed everywhere out of Palestine as the vehicle of a popular address, what necessity for the gift of any other language ? And if the Greek was understood even in Palestine, what necessity even there for the gift of that ?”<sup>\*</sup> It is thus supposed that, although Peter and James did not naturally use or understand Greek, yet by the gift of tongues, they were supernaturally endowed with a knowledge of that language. And such a supposition is clearly necessary on the part of many more

<sup>\*</sup> *Greswell*, “*Harmony of the Gospels*,” i., p. 141.



writers than seem inclined openly to adopt it. It furnishes the only possible mode of explaining the undoubted fact, that the primitive disciples of Jesus did possess such a knowledge of Greek as enabled them readily to speak and to write in it, unless the opinion advocated in this work as the correct one—that they spoke and wrote that language *naturally*—be fully accepted.\* But while the hypothesis of Greswell and others, as to the supernatural impartation of a knowledge of Greek to the apostles, certainly removes one class of difficulties, not otherwise, on their ground, to be evaded, it appears to me to entail on its advocates another class of difficulties not less manifest or formidable. I cannot but agree with those critics, who deem the supposition in question equally opposed to reason, ancient testimony, and Scripture. The idea that the apostles were taught Greek by the immediate interposition of Heaven—seems repugnant to the constitution and working of the human mind, and to all that is told us in, or may be inferred from, the Bible, as to the manner in which the Spirit of God operates upon it. He who has made us as we are, graciously and wisely accommodates His actings to that spiritual and intellectual nature which He has imparted; and ever honours His own workmanship, as

\* *Beza*, in his “*Dissertatio de dono Linguarum*,” says, in reply to Erasmus, (who properly held that the gift of tongues did not imply a supernatural communication of Greek to the apostles, though erring in his view of the miracle of Pentecost,) “*Quid ergo? A quo præceptore Græcam linguam illi didicerunt? ‘Nil mirum,’ inquit, ‘Apostolos citra miraculum Græce novisse, cum Ægyptus ac Syria totaque Cilicia vulgo Græce loqueretur.’ Id vero Erasmus probet, Judæis Græcum idioma tam fuisse familiare ut idiotis ac piscatoribus notum esse potuerit.*”—*Honert’s Syntagma Dissertationum de Stylo Nov. Test. Græco*; or, see *Beza* on Acts x. 46. The alternative, thus suggested, exactly brings out the real requirements of the case.

displayed in our mental habitudes and laws, by making use of these in the supernatural operations of His grace. Now, it has been admitted by the great majority of modern scholars, that such a supposition as that under consideration, is utterly opposed to all that we know, or can conceive, of the mechanism and exercise of the human understanding. "I would not conceal," says Dean Alford, "the difficulty which our minds find in conceiving a person supernaturally endowed with the power of speaking" (and the same remark applies of course to writing) "*ordinarily and consciously* a language which he has never learned. I believe that difficulty to be insuperable. Such an endowment would not only be contrary to the analogy of God's dealings, but as far as I can see into the matter, self-contradictory, and therefore impossible. But there is no such contradiction, and to my mind no such difficulty, in conceiving a man to be moved to utterance of sounds dictated by the Holy Spirit." And this, accordingly, is the view of the gift of tongues which is now obtaining general adoption. Almost all recent expositors agree with the foregoing remarks of Alford, and also with the views which he expresses when he says: "If the supposition be made that the gift of speaking in various languages was bestowed on the disciples for their after use in preaching the gospel, we are, I think, running counter to the whole course of Scripture, and early patristic evidence on the subject. There is no trace whatever of such a power being possessed or exercised by the apostles, or by those who followed them. (Compare chap. xiv. 11-14; Euseb., iii., 39; Iren., iii., 1.) I believe, therefore, the event related in our text to have been a sudden

and powerful inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by which the disciples uttered, not of their own minds, but as mouthpieces of the Spirit, the praises of God, in various languages, hitherto, and possibly at the time itself, unknown to them.”\*

In substantial accordance with this view, I believe it must be held that both the facts of Scripture, the testimony of antiquity, and the nature of the case, lead us to the conclusion that *no* language, hitherto unknown to the apostles, was then communicated to them for ordinary use in their subsequent career, as preachers or as writers in the service of the gospel. The miracle witnessed on the day of Pentecost seems to have had quite another object. It was intended, in a manner specially striking, to demonstrate the reality of a supernatural influence at work among the disciples of Jesus. It had, also, a symbolical import. It typified the manifold gifts of the Holy Ghost; and suggested the thought that these were not now to be confined to one, but extended to all nations. We find, accordingly, that the miracle was afterwards repeated on the formal and solemn reception of the Gentiles

\* *Alford*, in loc.; see also *Conyb. and Howson*, i., p. 470; *Alexander* on the Acts, i., p. 45, and almost every recent critical work on this portion of Scripture. Canon Wordsworth, however, in his late edition of the New Testament, contends strenuously for the old view of the gift of tongues, as intended to enable the apostles to preach the gospel through the wide bounds within which they spread it, and, indeed, as being indispensable for this purpose. I have carefully considered the arguments of this learned and excellent writer, but without being in any measure convinced by them. To support his theory, he assumes constantly that the apostles did not employ *Greek*, but the vernacular languages, in addressing the inhabitants of Asia Minor, an assumption not only quite gratuitous, but opposed to the whole character of the inspired narrative, as well as to all the antecedent probabilities of the case. See his notes on chap. xiii. 15, and xiv. 11.

into the Church. It is recorded, (Acts x. 44-46,) that, while Peter spoke to those assembled in the house of Cornelius, "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them *speak with tongues*, and magnify God." In this case, it is almost beyond dispute that the object of the miraculous effusion and special manifestation of the presence of the Spirit, was simply to indicate that there was henceforth to be no difference between Jew and Gentile—that both alike were to share in the blessings of salvation. And it appears plain, from Peter's words afterwards, (chap. xi. 15,) in referring to this event at Jerusalem, that the gift now bestowed upon the Gentiles was essentially the same as that received by the apostles on the day of Pentecost. "And as I began to speak," says the apostle, "the Holy Ghost fell on them, *as on us* at the beginning." The miracle, therefore, which is described in the second chapter, as appears from Scripture itself, is not to be regarded as implying any sudden or unnatural communication of knowledge. And we find no traces, in those remains which have been preserved to us of the apostles' discourses and writings, of such an endowment. The Bible is throughout the most *natural* of all books. Every writer, while under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is yet permitted freely to exhibit his own tendencies, to make use of his own acquirements, and to write in his own style. While the *whole* is the Word of God, the several *parts* are as manifestly the productions of different men. And this not only imparts to



it a charm, which a uniformity of thought or style would necessarily have lacked, but, as every one knows, serves a highly important purpose in the vital question of authenticity. In all thoroughly genuine and unaffected works the MAN appears in the AUTHOR. The book reflects the character, and, as it were, embodies the soul of him who composed it. *Le style c'est l'homme;*" and, as every reader must feel, this is strikingly characteristic of the Bible. Even its bitterest enemies cannot bring against it the charge of affectation, on the one hand, or monotony, on the other. Its human authors seem truly to have realised that remarkable expression by which some simple tribes have described the act of composition, and to have *pressed their souls on the paper* on which they wrote. Now, this is quite compatible with the doctrine, that they were supernaturally guided in the use of their natural powers; so that all their writings, while exhibiting their several characters and gifts, yet possess in common the attribute of Divine inspiration. But how it could be consistent with the miraculous impartation to any of them of a new language for ordinary use, seems impossible to conceive. Such a notion introduces the idea of the factitious and unreal, and appears quite repugnant to that naturalness which is so striking a characteristic of the Bible. In a word, the opinion that the *Greek* in which the apostles spoke and wrote—strongly marked as it is by local and individual peculiarities—was directly conveyed to them from Heaven, involves so many difficulties, if it does not even imply utter contradictions, that, although held by the great majority of expositors, from Chrysostom downwards, it is now, by general consent,

abandoned. We must therefore conclude, that when Peter, James, and John, spoke or wrote in the Greek tongue, they just *naturally* made use of a language with which they were well acquainted, and which they knew to be best fitted for the purpose designed to be accomplished.\*

But then, this conclusion immediately draws after it another. If Peter and James naturally made use of the Greek language, that language *must* have been known to all classes in the community. And this is a point which I beg to press upon the attention of those who maintain that Hebrew was then chiefly, or almost exclusively, the language of Palestine. How, I ask, in that case, were the apostles able, as they did, to write in Greek? The idea of a miracle having been wrought for this purpose being excluded by the considerations already noticed, there remains no other explanation of the fact in question, than that Greek was the language which they naturally employed. But then, as I maintain, this concession implies that it was in common use by the great body of the population. These first disciples of Jesus were taken from the lower ranks among the people. They had, no doubt, previous to their call to the apostleship, received the elements of an ordinary education; and there can be no question that, during the years of their intercourse with Jesus, great additions were made to their intellectual vigour and attainments.

\* Neander well remarks: "As to the Greek language, the mode in which the apostles expressed themselves in it, the traces of their mother-tongue which appear in their use of it, prove that they had obtained a knowledge of it *according to the natural laws of lingual acquirement*."—*Planting and Training of the Church*, p. 10, Eng. edit.

But all this will not account for their knowledge of Greek, if it be supposed that *Hebrew* was the only language to which they were accustomed in youth, and the language which they habitually employed in intercourse with their Divine Master. No one can doubt that they possessed a very considerable command of the Greek language; their writings are sufficient to prove that point. *How*, then, I ask again, did they acquire it? \* Not by miraculous interposition, as we have seen; it must therefore have been in the natural and ordinary way; and this being granted, it follows, as an irresistible inference, that if **THEY**, humble fishermen of Galilee, understood Greek to such an extent as naturally and easily to write it, *that language must have been generally known and used among the people.* †

\* It is necessary to urge this point; for numerous writers, while not affirming that the apostles were taught Greek supernaturally, seem oblivious of the fact that, if they were not so, the very use which they were able to make of it proves that it was generally known among their countrymen. Where did St James (who seems never to have left Jerusalem) obtain that acquaintance with Greek which he displays in his Epistle, if it was not commonly employed by those among whom he mingled? Are we to suppose that he, or any other of the apostles, devoted himself to the study of languages? See this point further noticed in Chap. VII.

† The above reasoning seems open to attack only on one side, and that, one to which few will probably turn. It might be said that, as the apostles belonged to the *lower* ranks among the people, their employment of the Greek language does not prove that it was generally used among the *higher*. Some idea of this kind seems to have been floating before the view of Credner, when he somewhat strangely writes: "So geschah es, dass in Palästina die griechische Sprache vorzüglich unter den *niedern* Ständen der Eingebornen Juden heimisch war, ohne dass sie darum den Uebrigen unbekannt bleiben konnte."—*Einkl. in das N. T.*, § 76. But we are generally told that the exact converse of this was true; as, for example, by Grinfield, when he says, "The knowledge of Greek was confined chiefly to the *upper* orders, and to the Roman officers."—*Apology for the Septuagint*, p. 76.

The same conclusion instantly follows from a consideration of the second question which was proposed, namely, How it could have been imagined that writings in Greek would be *understood* by the inhabitants of Palestine, and how they should accordingly have been addressed by the apostles in that language? Even supposing that an acquaintance with Greek was supernaturally conveyed to the *writers* of the New Testament, it cannot be supposed that their *readers* were supernaturally endowed to understand it. And as it is impossible to believe that such an Epistle as that of St James “to the twelve tribes in the dispersion,” that is, to the scattered Jewish believers wherever found,\* or the Epistle of St Paul (or whoever else may have been the author) to the Hebrews, would have been addressed to them in *Greek*, unless they had been able easily to read it, we must conclude that the Jews generally, IN Palestine as well as OUT of it, then possessed a familiar acquaintance with that language.

It is undoubtedly, on a general view of the subject, an evident and striking proof of the wisdom as well as goodness of God, that the Scriptures of the New Testament should have been given to mankind in a language understood by the world at large, and not in a dialect like the Aramæan, which was intelligible only within a very limited territory. But it is to blot and disparage both that wisdom and goodness, if it be supposed necessary that in order to carry their purpose into effect, the persons who were originally addressed had to be overlooked—that, by writing to them in Greek, *their* interests were to some extent sacrificed,

\* See *Alford's* Greek Testament, Vol. iv., Part i., Proleg. to Ep. of James, § ii., 9.



while those of the world at large were consulted. Yet this is the conclusion to which those must come who, admitting the Palestinian designation of the Epistle to the Hebrews, hold that Hebrew was, on any account, the proper language of religious address among the Jews in the days of Christ and His apostles. The Christians of Jerusalem and Judæa, they concede, were addressed in Greek by the writer of that Epistle which specially bears their name; and this, it is said, was done, not because that was the most fitting language in which to address them—the contrary is maintained—but for the sake of the rest of the world! Such a notion seems almost too preposterous to require refutation. It will again come under our notice in a subsequent chapter; and I simply remark in the meantime regarding it, that had the fact been as supposed, the Epistle in question must rather have irritated than edified those who received it. And if it be said, as it often is, that St Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, in order to conciliate the prejudices of his countrymen, by relating the Gospel-history in their own language, how much more necessary was it, that in an Epistle like that to the Hebrews, which strikes at the root of all that was peculiarly Jewish, this means of propitiating and pleasing them should not be neglected! Yet the Epistle in question was written in the *Greek*, and not in the Hebrew language.\*

\* See Chapter VI. for a full discussion of these points. The difficulty above suggested applies, of course, with double force to those who imagine that *Hebrew* was the prevailing language of Palestine at the time referred to, and yet are inclined to believe that the Gospel of St Matthew was at first written in *Greek*. That the evangelist, in whatever language he wrote, *specially* addressed himself to the Jews of Palestine is unquestionable.

But, on the other hand, if the proposition of this work be admitted, that Greek was then the fitting language of popular address in *Palestine*, as in the rest of the civilised world, how illustriously does the wisdom of God shine forth! He had by His providence gradually brought the world into such a condition, that without any violent interference on His part, there was existing on the earth, at the commencement of our era, a language which was known in common both by Jews and Gentiles. And thus, without any miraculous operations, and without the preference of the interests of any one nation to those of another, the Greek language was adopted as that of the New Testament—the language in which the Scriptures of the latter dispensation were *naturally*, as well as most fittingly, composed.

Looking, then, at that part of the New Testament which has alone been as yet particularly noticed—the Epistles—is not the natural inference to be drawn from the data which it furnishes, just that which has been stated—that Greek was then a familiar language to the inhabitants of Palestine? And why strive to reach any other conclusion? Why perplex and confound such a simple case as that of men writing naturally in a language which they themselves understood, to others in a language which they understood also, by supposing that the writers were led to compose their works in a language which they themselves did *not* naturally understand, and to send these to men who did not *easily*, perhaps not *at all*, comprehend what was thus addressed to them?

And if we now glance at the other great division of

the New Testament books—the Gospels—do we find any ground for supposing that these merely contain *translations* of the words which our Lord employed? Is there a single hint to that effect given by any of the writers? Do they not, on the contrary, express themselves exactly as they would have done, supposing they had meant to report to us the very language which was made use of by the Saviour? Their constant formula is, “Jesus *said*,” or “He spoke these *words*,” and that whether it happens to be Greek or Hebrew which they record as the language which was uttered. Not the least indication is ever furnished by the Evangelists that, for the most part, they convey to us only a translation of the words of Christ. And the supposition that such is the case, must be justified, if it can be justified at all, by considerations entirely extraneous to the tenor of the narrative. It is quite gratuitous, for instance, so far as the record is concerned, to imagine that St John *translated* the word which Jesus employed, when he tells us that our Lord exclaimed on the cross, *Τετέλεσται*. There is no intimation given us to that effect, any more than when we are informed by another Evangelist that He cried, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani;” the *onus probandi* therefore manifestly falls upon those who assert that, in either case, it is only a version of our Lord’s words which has been preserved; for the natural impression made upon our mind by the narrative is, that, in the one case, as much as in the other, the very language is reported to us which then actually proceeded out of the Saviour’s mouth.\*

\* It may be proper to notice a remark made on this passage as it stood in my former work. The writer of a review in *Evangelical Christendom*, (May 1860,) says of it: “We fancy every one will see the weakness of this argument. It may simply be replied, it was not

A very strange mode of reasoning, as humbly appears to me, has prevailed with respect to those occasional Aramaic expressions which are inserted in the Gospels as having been employed by Christ. It has been argued, that the occurrence of such terms, now and then, in the reports which have been preserved to us of our Lord's discourses, *proves* that He generally made use of the Syro-Chaldaic language; and that accordingly, it is in these few instances only, that we have examples of the very words which He employed. But such a conclusion rests upon a manifest *petitio principii*; there is not the least foundation furnished for it in the evangelic narrative. The writers (especially St John and St Mark) seem not a little anxious at times to let us know the *exact* words which our Lord and others employed. Only on the ground that they desired to be strictly accurate in this respect, can we account for the trouble which they so frequently take in preserving Aramaic expressions, and then appending to these an interpretation, instead of at once representing them by their Greek equivalents. But, with all this, none of them ever hint that they are giving the words of Jesus more exactly when they report Hebrew, than when they report Greek. On the contrary, as has been already remarked, the very same necessary to say 'Jesus spake in Aramaic, words which being interpreted are.' We suspect the cause that requires such arguments to be adduced." I am inclined to believe that most readers will easily perceive that, in the passage thus commented on, I am simply on the *defensive*, guarding against the assumption which is so generally made, that the discourses of our Lord, contained in the Gospels, are translations from the Hebrew. If they are so, PROVE it; but there is at least, I maintain, no *primâ facie* or direct evidence to that effect in the narratives of the evangelists. Such is all the weight I lay upon the consideration adduced above, though it is spoken of by the reviewer as if it were set forth as a positive or leading argument.



mode of expression is made use of by them, whether it be the one language or the other which our Lord is represented as employing; and to say therefore, that the occurrence, here and there, of an Aramaic word or phrase, proves that He habitually made use of that dialect, is simply to *assume* the point in question, and to mistake for a sound and valid argument, what is in reality a foregone conclusion.\*

The fact seems to be, that the occasional occurrence of Aramaic expressions in the Gospels, instead of proving that Christ *habitually* made use of that dialect, rather tends to prove the contrary. If it be maintained that Syro-Chaldaic was the language which He generally employed, the question at once occurs, why we have a few such words, and a few only, preserved to us as having been used by Him on rare occasions. On the supposition that He spoke usually in Greek,

\* The method of argument on which I have here taken the liberty of remarking, is found in countless writers. See, *e.g.*, among a host of others, *Winer*, *R.W.B.*, Art. Sprache; *Migne*, "Encyclopédie Théologique," vol. iii., Art. Matthieu; and (though, in this case, with some important qualifying remarks,) *Trench* on the Miracles, p. 186. As one of the latest specimens of the mode of reasoning referred to, I may quote here a single sentence from an article, entitled "Greek the Language of Inspiration in the New Testament," in *Evangelical Christendom* for September 1860, a periodical which has recently contained some valuable papers on biblical topics. The writer, after referring to the usual passages containing Aramaic expressions, adds, (p. 470,) "These instances *sufficiently prove* that our Lord spoke a language such as has been already described, of Hebrew substance indeed, but varied by Syriac, as it also was by Chaldee." The passages in question simply prove that our Lord spoke such a language *on these occasions*, and nothing more. It might almost as well be argued that, because the Aramaic terms *Maran-atha* occur in St Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, that Epistle was originally written in Hebrew, or that the Corinthians *generally* employed Hebrew, as that our Lord usually spoke in Hebrew, and that the Greek Gospels merely contain translations of His words, because He *occasionally* made use of an Aramaic expression.

these words, we may see, come in naturally enough as exceptions to the general rule, and are specially inserted as such, just as in the reported discussions of Cicero we often find a few Greek terms introduced ; and, as in our own language, a French or German expression may every now and then occur. But if, on the other hand, it be supposed that Christ really for the most part made use of the Aramaic, so that the Greek was the exception, and not the rule, in His discourses, it seems impossible to give any satisfactory, or even tolerable, explanation of the manner in which the few Aramaic words found in the Gospels are introduced. They certainly *appear* to be brought in as exceptional to our Saviour's practice ; and when regarded in that light, their occurrence can cause little difficulty, even although no evident reason may be found for His use of Aramaic on these particular occasions. But, when the opposite opinion is maintained, and when these words are looked on as being really specimens of His ordinary language, there is no principle of reason which can be suggested as likely to have guided the evangelists in their preservation and insertion. The most improbable, and even absurd, explanations of this matter have been offered by some of those who imagine that our Lord generally made use of Hebrew ; as will be plain from the following examples.

Dr Pfannkuche having stated that in the well-known passages, Matt. xxvii. 46, Mark xv. 34, v. 41, vii. 34, we have "some fragments of Christ's speeches preserved in the original language," adds in a note,—  
 "We can only conjecture why these passages of our Greek Gospels, which otherwise always give Jesus's speeches and sayings in Greek, contain only a few words

of the original text. In the two first-quoted passages, as it seems, the original expression is inserted, because thereby light is thrown upon the circumstance immediately after mentioned,—that Jesus, according to the supposition of some by-standers, cried for help from Elias. In the two latter passages, where the preservation of the original seems to be rather *accidental* than *intentional*, the translator may have been in the same predicament as the authors of the Alexandrine version, who, now and then, did retain, probably from *mere inadvertence*, a single Hebrew word,"\* &c.

It is needless to notice the weakness of this explanation, if, indeed, it deserves the name of explanation. The dishonour which it does to the character of our Gospels, as written by *intelligent*, not to say *inspired* men, must be obvious to every reader.

But other solutions of the difficulty have been suggested. By far the most plausible of such solutions is that which conceives of *these* particular Aramaic expressions having been preserved rather than others, on account of the peculiar solemnity which belongs to them. This view is stated by Dean Trench as follows,—"St Mark gives us, probably from the lips of Peter, the very words which the Lord spake in the very lan-

\* On this passage the English translator of Pfannkuche, while favourable to the general view maintained by his author, remarks, with his usual candour, "The translator is not much disposed to dispute the author's position with regard to the language of Palestine at the time of Christ; but he thinks it but fair to observe, that the proof here drawn from Christ's speeches is *excessively weak*." He then goes on to shew this, and adds, "After all, Dr Pfannkuche here only *presupposes*, and has not *proved* that the Greek Gospels are only translations." *Ex uno disce omnes*: it has been *supposition*, and not *proof*, which has been characteristic of all that have maintained the views of Pfannkuche on this matter.

guage wherein He uttered them—*Talitha cumi*—no doubt as having something especially solemn in them ; as he does the *Ephphatha* on another occasion.”\* But, if I may venture an expression of dissent from the many eminent scholars who seem willing to rest in this explanation, I must confess that it appears to me very far from satisfactory. There are numerous occasions, at least equally solemn, on which our Lord’s words are given in *Greek*,—such as those majestic terms preserved in St Mark only, by which He soothed the tempestuous lake, and that mighty utterance of power which, as St John informs us, brought forth from his grave the sleeping Lazarus. These two scenes must be allowed to have been among the most sublime in our Lord’s history ; and if He had really been in the habit of speaking in Aramaic, and if the solemnity or grandeur of the circumstances in which He spoke had been deemed by the evangelists a sufficient reason at any time for preserving the very language which He employed, there are no occasions on which this feeling could have operated more strongly than on those which have been mentioned. Surely also, in such a case, we might have expected to have had preserved, in their original form, more of those impressive words which He spoke upon the cross. Only one of His seven cries is given in Aramaic ; the rest in Greek. And can it be conceived that the beloved disciple, who is so ready, on other occasions, to report the Hebrew terms which his Lord and those about Him employed,† would have failed to preserve some of these in their original form, had they really been uttered in Aramaic ? John stood

\* *Trench* “On the Miracles,” p. 186.

† See, *e.g.*, St John’s Gospel, chap. i. 42, 43, ix. 2, xx. 16, &c.



with a bleeding heart by the cross of his Master. Alone of all the apostles he was an eye-witness of the crucifixion. He heard, with his own ears, the words which the Saviour now spoke ; and these must have sunk far too deeply into his affectionate memory ever afterwards to be forgotten. For our own part, we believe that they never were, and never will be, forgotten. According to our view, the faithful pen of the apostle has recorded the exact expressions which our Lord employed ; when glancing first at his weeping mother, and then at his dearest disciple, He said to her, *Γύναι, ἰδὲ ὁ υἱός σου*, while to him He added, *Ἴδὲ ἡ μήτηρ σου*. And the same pen, I believe, has accurately preserved, in its original form, that one word *Διψῶ*, the utterance of which both indicated the intense anguish of our Lord at the moment, and accomplished the last predicted circumstance of His sufferings,—as well as that still more significant *Τετέλεσται*, the word of words among all that ever passed human lips, and which, when it issued from the mouth of the Divine Redeemer indicated that His sufferings were over, and His work fulfilled. I must reject, then, as altogether insufficient, that explanation of the Aramaic terms in question, which would account for them on the ground of the *solemnity* of the circumstances in which they were uttered ; and I cannot but reckon their insertion in the inspired record utterly inexplicable, if it be supposed that Christ commonly made use of the Hebrew language.\*

\* I deem it needless to notice particularly other explanations which have been attempted of the occurrence of these Aramaic expressions in the Greek Gospels, on the supposition that they are really specimens of our Lord's ordinary language. The following may be quoted without comment. *Lamius*, after stating that no ingenuity could account

But now it may asked—Can any explanation of the occurrence of these Aramaic expressions be given on the theory maintained in this work—that our Lord spoke for the most part in Greek, and only now and then in Hebrew? In answer to this question, it seems almost sufficient to repeat the statement which has already oftener than once been made, as to the relation which is conceived to have existed between the two languages. Let it be remembered, that I admit and maintain the simultaneous existence in Palestine, at the date referred to, of both the Aramaic and Greek, the former language being, no doubt, in many respects subordinate to the latter, but still the mother-tongue of most of the *native* population; and how natural the supposition that, in such circumstances, our Lord should have sometimes found it expedient to depart from His usual practice, and make use of the debased, but still vernacular, language of the country. Occasions may easily be imagined on which He would find it suitable to do so; just as a public teacher in many countries at the present day, while generally employing the language of literature there prevalent, would find it edifying and instructive at times to introduce a pithy expression, or a familiar and homely phrase, from the common, everyday language of the people.\*

for the insertion of the terms in question, nevertheless makes an effort, with regard to two of them, when he adds, “*Quancum de Talitha-cumi dicere possum, retenta fuisse illa Syro-Chaldæa verba, quod essent veluti verba concepta, et formula quæ Judæi uti solebant, cum medicamenta ægrotis adhiberent, dicentes, Surge à morbo tuo, ut recte ac scite adnotavit Erasmus. Quod autem ad vocem Ephpheta attinet, exarata Syriace ab Evangelista videatur, quod gemitu et clamore quodam emissio, Christus subspirans eam pronunciaverit, ut sonus ipsissimus quodammodo illius clamoris perciperetur, vel saltem meminisset.*”—*Lamius De Eruditione Apostolorum*, p. 1093.

\* I may give the following illustrations. On one occasion Dr Chal-

The necessity for explanation, then, is, on our hypothesis, much less stringent than on the opposite. If it be supposed that our Lord spoke almost always in Aramaic, it seems truly singular that so very few of His sayings in that language should have been preserved by the Evangelists, and that no hint should have been given that they were then specially reporting to us the very words which He employed. If, on the other hand, Greek was the language which He generally made use of, and if, accordingly, His discourses, so far as preserved, are reported to us almost *verbatim* by the writers of the Gospels, there is no ground for surprise that an Aramaic word or phrase

mers, the great Scottish preacher, was labouring, with all the power of his earnest and eloquent lips, to convey to a poor woman whom he had visited an acquaintance with the nature of *faith*. He tried to represent his meaning under every form of speech which the English language afforded, but in vain. There was still no sign of answering intelligence on the part of his hearer; when at last, deserting the English language altogether, he cried, "Just *lippen* to Him." This word "lippen" is the common Scotch expression for *confide* or *trust*; and it was no sooner uttered than the idea wished to be conveyed was apprehended. What all the illustrative power of Chalmers failed to effect by means of *English*, was at once accomplished by his use of this *Scotch* expression; and yet it could surely never be argued from this that his addresses, even to the humblest audiences, generally *were*, or *should have been*, delivered in the latter language.—In many parts of England even, the common dialect differs so much from that of books and education, that the people may be said to employ two different languages. This has been recently noticed in some educational reports. "In Teesdale," for instance, we are told, "though the presence of education is such that the adult population generally understand any ordinary English book, they still use the local dialect as their everyday medium. It would be deemed affectation to do otherwise. Hence children find the language of books strange for a time."—Quoted in *Times*, Sept. 2, 1861. Now, in circumstances like these, occasions will doubtless often arise when it is found necessary or beneficial, in the course of public instruction, to introduce a word or two from the popular dialect; while, at the same time, it is the English of educated men which is the language of all ordinary public addresses, just as we conceive the Greek to have been in Palestine in the time of Christ.

should now and then occur, even although we may not perceive the reason why that language was then employed by our Lord, or why its employment was particularly noticed by the evangelists. But I am willing to go further than this. I am humbly inclined to believe that some reasons may be gathered from the special circumstances in which the few Aramaic expressions of a striking nature which are preserved in the Gospels were made use of, why *that* language, rather than the Greek, should have been employed, and why its employment should have been expressly recorded in the narrative.

The first passage calling for explanation, is Mark v. 41, which is thus rendered in our English version : "He took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, *Talitha-cumi*, which is, being interpreted, Damsel, (I say unto thee,) arise." Now, on the supposition that Greek was our Lord's usual form of address, I cannot but think that a very good and satisfactory reason may be perceived for the exception which is here particularly noted. The language which He employed at this time was of course immaterial, so far as the result was concerned ; the designed effect would have followed, whatever words, or, although no words, had been made use of ; and, as the English translator of Pfannkuche's work has remarked, "whether the people standing by understood them or not, was of no moment." It must then have been from considerations connected with the *damsel herself*, that our Lord's choice of a language on this occasion was determined ; and I venture to propose the following, as sufficient to account for His having made use of the Aramaic. The person on whom the miracle was per-



formed was of tender years ; and, being the daughter of a strictly Jewish\* family, she was probably as yet but little acquainted with the Greek. At any rate, Greek was to her, as to every native Jew, a language not generally employed in the domestic circle ; and it was to Hebrew that her ears from infancy had been accustomed. How beautifully accordant, then, with the character of Him whose heart was tenderness itself, that now, as He bent over the lifeless frame of the maiden, and breathed that life-giving whisper into her ear, it should have been in the loved and familiar accents of her mother-tongue ! Although dead and insensible the moment before the words were uttered, yet, ere the sound of them passed away, there was life and sensibility within her. Does not every reader therefore perceive, in the thoughtful tenderness of the act, a most sufficient reason why it was in Hebrew, and not in Greek, that our Lord now addressed her ? And do we not also discover a cause why the fact of His having done so should be specially noticed by the evangelist ? Are we not thus furnished with a new and affecting example of our Saviour's graciousness ? And do we not feel that St Mark—the most minutely descriptive of all the evangelists—deserves our gratitude for having taken pains to record it ? Softly and sweetly must the tones of that loving voice, speaking in the language of her childhood, have fallen on the

\* It is scarcely needful to remind the reader that her father is described as being “a ruler of the synagogue”—ἀρχισυνάγωγος—a fact which it seems of some importance to keep in mind while seeking to account for our Lord's employment of Aramaic on this occasion. Common as Greek was throughout the country, it was exactly of such a case as hers that it might be said, (as in the analogous case referred to in the preceding note,) with respect to the language of literature and ordinary public address, that *children found it strange for a time*.

sleeping spirit of the maiden ; and by words of tenderness, no less than words of power, was she thus recalled to life and happiness.

Equally natural, as I am inclined to think it, is the explanation, which may, on the hypothesis of this work, be given of our Lord's use of the Aramaic language in the case of the deaf and dumb man, of which we find a record in Mark vii. 32-37. At verse 34, we read that the Saviour, having gone through those impressive preliminaries by which this miracle was preceded, said to the sufferer, "Ephphatha." And "straightway," it is added, "his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain." Now here, as before, our Lord's choice of a particular language could have been determined only by *a regard to the man himself*. And, as the slightest additional reason for His selection of one language rather than another must have been quite enough for Him who never violated propriety, in even the lowest degree, we may be satisfied if we can discover, in the peculiar circumstances of this man, the least possible ground for the preference here given by our Lord to the Aramaic over the Greek. Supposing, then, as some commentators do, that the man had been hitherto entirely deaf and speechless, it will, perhaps, appear to every one fitting and proper that the very first sounds which fell upon his ears, and the first which his liberated tongue would naturally attempt to imitate, should be those of the vernacular language of his country. So far as respected the power of articulate speech, this man was as a child. He had to *learn to speak*, as the infant gradually does ; and, while Jesus removed the impediments which had hitherto prevented this, He

did not, of course, convey to the man a miraculous acquaintance with any language. The faculty of speech was imparted ; but it had to be used by the man himself, in order to lead to those attainments of which till now he had been destitute ; and, dealing with him as with a child, which in respect to speech he was, the Saviour now kindly and graciously addressed him in the mother-tongue of his native land.

But a somewhat different view may be taken of this man's case, and one which, with Trench and others, I prefer. It would seem, from some expressions made use of in the narrative, that the man was not *entirely* destitute of the power of speech, nor, of course, in that case, of hearing. He is said to have been *μογιλάλος*, and, after the miracle was performed to have spoken *ὀρθῶς*—both of which terms appear to imply that he had previously been able, in a measure, to speak and hear, though very defectively. And, on this supposition, it is perhaps still more easy to see why our Lord addressed him in Aramaic. In addition to the consideration formerly mentioned, there is now this one, that that was the *only* language of which it was at all likely the sufferer could possess any knowledge. He was dealt with throughout as an intelligent being. The various signs employed, doubtless, conveyed a meaning to his mind ; and when, at last, the decisive word was spoken, it was in the highest degree proper that *that also* should be intelligible to him. It was, therefore, graciously uttered in a language which alone, in his afflicted circumstances, he could have learned at all to understand—the mother-tongue of his native country.

In the only other remarkable instance, recorded in

the Gospels, of our Lord's use of Hebrew instead of Greek—His cry upon the cross—an obvious reason, which we may venture to assign for His having chosen the one language in preference to the other, will, I am disposed to believe, present itself to every reader. His thoughts naturally reverted, in that hour of suffering, to the very words which His illustrious type had used in the time of his distress—words on which the Saviour's mind had, no doubt, often before pondered, and words therefore, which then spontaneously rose to His lips, in their original form, as He now experienced the hidings of His Father's countenance.\*

\* In writing thus, I am, of course, perfectly aware that, as the words in question stand in the Greek Gospels, they are in the form, not of ancient, but modern Hebrew. But, even though actually spoken as recorded by St Mark, the language used with respect to them above could scarcely be regarded as altogether inappropriate, for they might still be said, even in their most Aramaised form, when *compared* with the corresponding *Greek*, to re-echo the very tones of the Psalmist. And I venture to think it by no means certain that our Lord did not, in fact, employ the exact expressions of David. Supposing Him to have done so, it is still probable, I think, that the evangelists would have preserved the words in Aramaic. This I reckon probable, both because we have every reason to believe that the writers were but little acquainted with ancient Hebrew, and because the evangelic narrative having been often repeated to those who understood (besides Greek) only modern Hebrew, the passage in question would soon come to be expressed in that corrupted form of the ancient language. And in the variations which are here found in the respective texts of Matthew and Mark, we seem to trace the process of deflection from the original words, as perhaps spoken by our Saviour. St Matthew, according to the received text, differs only by a single word (σαβχαρῶν for עֲוֹנָתִי) from the Hebrew of the Psalms, while St Mark imparts a stronger Aramaic colouring to the whole exclamation. And the remark of *Beza* (in loc.) seems here in point: "Ego arbitror Christum Hebræas Davidis voces usurpasse, ut apparet ex manifestiori paronomasia *Eli* et *Eliæ*." It may perhaps be said, that the reason assigned above for the employment of Hebrew, instead of Greek, by our Lord on this occasion, would equally apply to the last words He uttered upon the cross, which are nevertheless given by St Luke in *Greek*. But although Greek is the language employed by the evangelist, I think it not *altogether* im-



And, on the hypothesis that our Lord spoke for the most part in Greek, we can also very naturally account for those isolated and occasional Hebrew terms which occur in His discourses. The Aramaic had, as a matter of course, no small influence upon the Greek of the country ; and necessarily insinuated many of its idioms and expressions into the coexisting language. Hence the occurrence of such words as *Amen*, *Corban*, *Rabbi*, &c., of such designations as *Cephas*, *Boanerges*, &c., and of such phrases as *πρόσωπον λαμβάνειν*, *γέεσθαι θανάτου*, &c. It seems no easy matter, on the supposition that our Lord generally made use of Hebrew, to account for the retaining of such words as *Πατὴρ*, (Matt. v. 22,) and *Μαμμωνᾶ*, (Luke xvi. 11,) while His language is for the most part translated. For why, it may be well asked, should an exception be made in favour of *these* expressions? What right had *they* to stand as they were originally uttered, while the whole context in which they are imbedded was subjected to a process of translation? It certainly does appear to me somewhat difficult to answer these questions, on the hypothesis that our Lord spoke for the most part

probable that this quotation from the Psalms (Ps. xxxi. 5, with the insertion of the word *Father*) was, like the former one, made by our Lord in Hebrew. St Luke never appears so solicitous, as are the other evangelists, to preserve the *exact* words which our Lord employed, (compare *e.g.*, chap. viii. 54 with Mark v. 41, and, generally, the Gospel of Luke with the other synoptics;) and as *he* is the only one who mentions this last utterance of Christ on the cross, we are at liberty to believe that, though preserved to us in Greek, it was really expressed in Hebrew. On the whole, however, I am inclined to believe that the words were spoken by our Lord as we find them given by the evangelist. And I would explain the difference of language in the two quotations by the fact, that the 22d Psalm is so thoroughly Messianic, and must therefore, in its original form, have been deeply engraven on our Lord's memory ; while, in the other case, He simply adopts, and adapts to His own circumstances, the sentiment expressed by David.

in Hebrew ; whereas, on the theory here maintained, that the substance of His discourse was Greek, and has thus been reported to us in its original form by the evangelists, nothing could be more natural, or indeed inevitable, than that such Aramaic words and phrases should, from time to time, occur and be preserved.

It appears, then, from a general survey of the whole New Testament, that there is every reason to conclude that Greek was generally known and used in Palestine, in the days of Christ and His Apostles ;—that THAT accordingly was the language which He and they *usually* employed ;—and that, while both the Master and His disciples sometimes made use in public of the Aramaic dialect, such an occurrence was quite *exceptional* to their ordinary practice, and is, on that account, specially noticed in the evangelic history.

## CHAPTER IV.

### SPECIAL PROOFS FROM THE GOSPELS THAT GREEK WAS THE PREVAILING LANGUAGE OF PALESTINE IN THE TIMES OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.

WE next proceed to support the conclusion already reached on general grounds, by a consideration of some particular incidents and statements which are set before us in the New Testament. And we shall begin our examination by a closer scrutiny of the Gospels than has yet been given them, in the hope of discovering evidence in their intimations, that Greek *was* the language which our Lord usually employed ; and that therefore these inspired narratives have, to a great extent, preserved the very words which He uttered, for the lasting gratification and delight of all succeeding generations.

In what language, then, was the *Sermon on the Mount* delivered ? Most readers will doubtless be inclined at once to answer, that it was in Aramaic. This is the almost universal opinion. The ablest and most elaborate works on this portion of Scripture, while touching upon every other question concerning it, assume for the most part, without a word on the subject, that its original language was Hebrew. I humbly

venture, however, to maintain the contrary, and to affirm that the language now employed by our Lord was Greek, influenced, in doing so, by the following considerations.

To WHOM was that discourse addressed? This question has obviously a most important bearing on the other as to the language in which it was spoken. Our Lord, of course, intended that *all* His hearers should understand Him. He did not, therefore, employ a form of speech, which, while it might be understood by some, would be unintelligible to others; but, ignoring provincial or local peculiarities of dialect, addressed them all in one common language.

Let us look, then, at the composition of His vast audience, as it is suggested to us by St Matthew. In the introduction to the great discourse recorded by that evangelist, we read as follows, (chap. iv. 23-25,) —“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people; and his fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy, and he healed them; and there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from *Decapolis*, and from *Jerusalem*, and from Judæa, and from beyond Jordan.” And then we immediately read, (chap. v. 1, 2,) that “seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain; and when he was set, his disciples came unto him, and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,” &c. There can be no doubt that



the discourse was addressed to the *whole* assemblage, so far as the mere hearing of it was concerned. Several passages, indeed, such as chap. v. 13; vi. 9; vii. 6, indicate that our Lord spoke more immediately to His disciples. But it is also plain from other passages, that He spoke so as to be heard and understood by the multitude at large; for we are told chap. vii. 28, that “when Jesus had ended these sayings, the *people* (οἱ ὄχλοι) were astonished at His doctrine,”—thus proving that they had all been addressed in His discourse, and had all listened with some degree of intelligence to the instructions which He delivered.\*

Now, have we any reason to believe that the inhabitants of *Decapolis* understood Hebrew? Is it not, on the contrary, well known that the ten cities which gave name to that region were thoroughly Greek, and that vast numbers of the population were not even Jews by religious profession, but heathen?† It is

\* *Tholuck* gives a very good account of this matter. “The import of Matt. v. 2 is the following: ‘The sight of the great concourse of people induced Jesus to withdraw, in order to impart instruction to His disciples. He accordingly ascended a mountain there, that He might teach His disciples,’ (Meyer on Matt. v. 2.) No doubt the multitude must be regarded as hearers, (v. 1, vii. 28; Luke vii. 1.) But such expressions as ver. 12–16 seem to presuppose that in those addressed the life of faith had already begun; and again, expressions such as ver. 12, where those addressed are viewed as occupying the same footing with the prophets, (comp. διδάξῃ, ver. 19, and vii. 6,) evidently refer to teachers. Hence, we must consider the discourse as addressed primarily to the disciples, and secondarily to the people; and the degree of its bearing upon these different classes as expressed by the relative position of the hearers to the speaker. Thus, the twelve formed a circle in the Saviour’s immediate neighbourhood; farther off stood the μαθηταί, whom St Luke vi. 13, 17, distinguishes from the ἀπόστολοι; and beyond them stood the crowd.”—*Tholuck’s Sermon on the Mount*, Introd., p. 14; Clark’s For. Theol. Library, Edin. 1860.

† *Winer, R.W.B.*, describes Decapolis as follows: “Ein District von 10 Städten mit wesentlich heidnischer Bevölkerung.”—Art. Decapolis.

difficult to ascertain, with exactness, the particular ten cities which were included in the district ; and not improbably, the name continued, while some of the cities, once comprehended under it, had sunk into decay. Different lists of these cities are given by ancient writers. Pliny, expressly noticing this diversity, mentions the following—Scythopolis, Hippos, Gadara, Pella, Philadelphia, Gerasa, Dion, Canatha, Damascus, and Raphana. Josephus again, by stating (Wars, iii., 9, 7) that Scythopolis was the largest city of Decapolis, seems plainly to exclude Damascus from the number ; and yet other slight variations occur in the lists which have come down to us from antiquity.\*

But there is no doubt about the leading cities in the district, which were, Gadara, Gerasa, Philadelphia, Hippos, Pella, and Scythopolis. And the important point to be noticed is, that, as Josephus informs us, these were thoroughly *Greek* cities. He expressly gives that name to Gadara and Hippos;† and he refers to the others in such terms as leave no doubt that the Greek element also prevailed largely among their inhabitants.‡ Nothing indeed, is more certain, or more generally agreed upon by critics, than that this region of Decapolis was occupied almost exclusively by heathen settlers, or Hellenising Jews ; and it follows therefore, that, as the Sermon on the Mount was *intended* to be understood, and actually *was* understood

To the same effect, Dean Trench remarks, that “a great part of the population of Decapolis was certainly Gentile.”—*Notes on the Miracles*, p. 174.

\* See *Smith's* “Dictionary of the Bible,” Art. Decapolis, for a statement of these variations.

† “Γάδαρα καὶ Ἱππος Ἑλληνίδες εἰσὶ πόλεις.”—*Joseph., Antiq.*, xvii., 11, 4 ; see also Wars, ii., 6, 3.

‡ *Joseph.*, Wars, ii., 18, 1.

by inhabitants of that district, it must have been delivered in the GREEK language.

This conclusion, derived from a consideration of St Matthew's Gospel, is greatly strengthened when we turn to the parallel passage in St Luke. Without entering on the difficult question as to the identity of the discourse contained in Luke vi. 20-49, with that recorded in Matt. v.-vii.—a point immaterial to our argument—let us mark the language which St Luke employs with respect to the *persons* to whom the sermon which he reports was addressed. At chap. vi. 17, we find these described by the evangelist as follows:—"And he came down with them, (the apostles,) and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all *Judæa* and *Jerusalem*, and from the sea-coast of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, who came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases." We thus learn that among our Lord's audience on this occasion, there were the inhabitants at once of Jerusalem, and of Tyre and Sidon. In the discourse which follows, it is manifest that while, as in Matthew, some passages are specially applicable to the apostles, the whole multitude was simultaneously addressed; and that, of course, in a language which all understood. What, then, *was* that language? Will any one maintain that it was Hebrew, in the face of that clear evidence which we possess, that Greek was the only language then generally employed in the region of Tyre and Sidon? Josephus has preserved an edict of Mark Antony addressed to the people of Tyre, which begins as follows:—"M. Antony, imperator, to the magistrates, senate, and people of Tyre, sendeth greeting. I have sent you my decree, respecting which I

will that ye take care that it be engraven in the public tables, in *Roman and Greek* letters, and that it stand engraven in the most conspicuous places, so as to be read by ALL.”\* It is plain from this, that Greek was the language of the district, and that no other was commonly employed, since (in addition to the official Latin) Greek was the *only* tongue in which the edict was commanded to be published. In like manner, we read respecting Sidon, that Julius Cæsar sent a decree to its inhabitants, which contained the injunction that it should be “publicly set forth on a tablet of brass in the *Greek* and Latin languages.”† Again, we are told in general of the cities, Tyre, Sidon, and Ascalon, (the last of which, it is worthy of remark, was situated in Palestine itself,) that a decree of the same Roman magistrate was ordered to be published at each of them in the *Greek* and Latin languages.‡ It seems too plain, from all this, to admit of any denial, that Greek was then the only language commonly employed by the natives of the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon;§ so that a discourse intended to be understood by them, must of necessity have been delivered in the Greek language.

But if this conclusion be admitted, the whole controversy may be regarded as settled. Conceding that

\* *Joseph.*, *Antiq.*, xiv., 12, 5.

† *Ibid.*, xiv., 10, 2.

‡ *Ibid.*, xiv., 10, 3.

§ This conclusion is still further confirmed by two inscriptions found at Puteoli, the one being the copy of a letter which the inhabitants of that place addressed to the people of Tyre, and the other a copy of the answer which the Tyrians returned, both of which are written in the *Greek* language. See *Gruteri*, “*Inscriptiones antiquæ totius Orbis Romani*,” tom. ii., p. 1105. *Binterim* remarks, “*Ægyptios à tempore Ptol. Lagi Græcam linguam locutos fuisse, sicut et Phœnicos constat.*”—*De Lingua*, &c., p. 169.



the Sermon on the Mount, as reported by St Matthew, or the analogous discourse recorded by St Luke, was spoken by our Lord in Greek, it will be difficult any longer to deny the validity of the proposition of this work, that Greek was the language which He *commonly* employed. There were on the occasion or occasions referred to, the inhabitants of Judæa and Jerusalem, no less than of Decapolis, and Tyre and Sidon, among his hearers ; and it is quite evident, from the evangelic narratives, that all equally understood Him, and were, therefore, all perfectly familiar with the Greek language.

There are just two views which can be taken of the question we are now considering. The sermon (or, if you will, sermons) referred to, was spoken *either in Hebrew or Greek*. If any one says Greek, then he admits all for which I plead. If, on the other hand, any one maintains that it was Hebrew, he is bound also to maintain that the inhabitants of Decapolis and Tyre and Sidon then understood that language. In that case, I beg to demand the proof of such an allegation. I venture humbly, but confidently, to affirm that no proof of the kind can be produced ; and that, as has been already shewn, Greek was then the language of these districts.\* Assumptions may, no doubt, be met with in several writers, to the effect, that what they call a Syro-Phœnician dialect was then prevalent

\* *Sperling*, referring to the fact that all the Tyrian coins of this period bore Greek inscriptions, remarks, in explanation of this point : "Postquam enim Alexandri Magni successores et Græci Syriam tenuerunt, et Græce illic locuti sunt, et non nisi Græce scripserunt, et Græcorum moribus res omnes administrârunt, ergo nummos quoque ; omnisque Tyria vel Phœnicia scriptio vetusta et inscriptio *evanuit ac perivit*."—*De nummis non cisis*," p. 51.

in these regions ; but not a vestige of evidence is presented. Gesenius, who will not be suspected of any undue leaning towards the views maintained in this work, states, in his elaborate treatise on the ancient Language of Phœnicia, that, from the time of Alexander downwards, it was gradually encroached upon by the Greek, until, at length, it became altogether extinct.\* He thinks, indeed, from the evidence of a few coins of uncertain date, that it continued to be used, "aliquo modo," down to the times of the Antonines ; but is very far from suggesting that it was generally employed among the people in the days of our Saviour. And, even granting that this was the case, it would still remain to be shewn that the Syro-Phœnician and Syro-Chaldaic dialects were identical ; or, if different, which of them was now adopted by our Lord, since He had hearers at once from Tyre and Jerusalem ? The truth is, as I trust has been sufficiently proved, that neither the one nor the other was employed ; but that the very Greek, in substance, which is still preserved in the Gospels—the peculiar, Orientalised Greek of Syria and Palestine, bearing throughout such a strong, Shemitic colouring, and embalming, so to speak, some such Aramaic terms as *Raca* and *Morè*, which had, most naturally, forced

\* "Quo tempore prisci sermonis usus in Phœnicia interciderit Græcoque cesserit, accurate definiri non potest, quanquam post Alexandri tempora et vigente Seleucidarum tempore id sensim accidisce debet ; diutius tamen quam apud Hebræos et usque ad Antoninos aliquo modo eum perstitisse, quum alias ob causas credibile est (Hebræorum enim lingua jam inde ab exilio ab invalescente Aramæâ sede sua deturbari cœperat, quum contra pacatiores Phœniciarum urbium res prisci sermonis usui faverent) tum nuni ostendunt usque ad illa tempora Phœnicia lingua literisque Phœniciis inscripti."—*Gesenius, Scripturæ Linguaeque Phœnicia Monumenta*," p. 339.

their way into the language—was made use of by our Lord in this the solemn and impressive commencement of His public ministry.

But then, as I have already remarked, this is a *ruling case* with respect to the question under discussion. If our Lord spoke in Greek on the occasion referred to, it is certain that the inhabitants of Judæa and Jerusalem were thoroughly familiar with that language; and it would, therefore, be quite arbitrary to conclude that the Saviour ever employed any other in addressing them, unless a special intimation to that effect is made by the evangelists, or some circumstances present themselves which render it probable that a departure from His usual practice did at any time take place.

And here I cannot but observe that very many of the proofs adduced in this and the following chapters from the New Testament, must be held *decisive* of the controversy, unless these proofs can *all* be repelled as unsatisfactory. If it be once granted that our Lord inaugurated His public work as a teacher by delivering a long discourse to a promiscuous auditory in *Greek*, the conflict is virtually at an end; and we expect only in future to find everywhere confirmatory evidence of the conclusion which has already been reached. And so with not a few of the examples about to be noticed. The argument is of a strikingly cumulative character. Each separate part of it gives strength to all the rest. And any one of the proofs, that our Lord employed Greek on ordinary occasions, being admitted as satisfactory, goes far to establish that point with respect to other cases, which in themselves might have been regarded as doubtful.

Desiring the reader to bear this remark in mind, and to excuse that *embarras des richesses* which is almost the only difficulty that besets us in the further prosecution of our argument, let me now direct attention to those passages in the Gospels, in which our Saviour on the one hand, or His hearers on the other, are represented as making QUOTATIONS from the Old Testament. The question which here occurs is—In what *language* were these quotations made? To this question it may be answered *first*, that they were made directly from the original text, in ancient Hebrew; or, *secondly*, that they were made in Aramaic; or, *thirdly*, what I believe to be the only tenable opinion, that they were made, as they still stand in the Gospels, from the Greek version of the Septuagint. Let us examine these three hypotheses, with the view of ascertaining which of them alone can be regarded as consistent with the facts of the case.

First, then, there is probably an indefinite notion in the minds of many readers, that the citations referred to were made from the ancient Hebrew text. When we read, as we so often do, of the appeals which our Lord and those around Him made to the *Scriptures*, we think, of course, of the Old Testament; and the impression is perhaps received and rested in, that the references were made to the original Hebrew text. But a very few words are sufficient to refute this opinion. It is certain that, long before the birth of our Saviour, the ancient Hebrew had ceased to be generally known or employed among the people. We cannot, indeed, fix the exact time when it ceased to be a living language, in the usual sense of these words, that is, ceased to be the ordinary language of speech



and writing among the Jews. Opinions differ among the learned on this point. Some have inferred from the well-known passage in Nehemiah, (chap. viii. 8,) that even at the date of the return from the Captivity, (about 450 B.C.,) the knowledge of ancient Hebrew had been lost by the great body of the people, and was never again recovered. Others contend that the passage referred to merely implies that Ezra paraphrased or explained, not interpreted or translated, the portions which he then read from the sacred books.\* But, whatever view may be adopted on this subject, it is

\* As above remarked, the question as to the time when the ancient Hebrew ceased to be generally used among the Jews, is one on which opinion is much divided, and which does not seem to admit of definite settlement. The learned Jewish authorities, Rabbis and Talmudists, generally assume that it continued to be used only up to the time of the Exile, and was then gradually superseded by the Aramaic. This opinion has been adopted by many Christian writers, such as *Buxtorf* and *Walton*, and has, more recently, been maintained by *Hengstenberg*, ("Authenticity of the Book of Daniel," *Clark's For. Theol. Lib.*, p. 242, seq.,) and by *Hävernick* ("Introd. to the Old Test.," § 35.) Others, again, such as *Gesenius* and *Bleek*, have contended against this opinion, as resting upon a mistaken apprehension of the meaning of the word מִפָּרֵשׁ employed in Neh. viii. 8. *Gesenius* observes ("Heb. Gramm.," § 2, 5; comp. "Gesch. des Heb. Spr.," § 13,) "It is a false impression, derived from a misinterpretation of Neh. viii. 8, that the Jews, during their exile, had wholly forgotten their ancient language, and were obliged to learn its meaning from the priests and scribes." And *Bleek* maintains ("Einl. in das A. T.," p. 96) that the true meaning of the disputed word is not *translated* or *interpreted*, but *distinct* or *clear*, so that the passage simply implies that Ezra *explained* those portions of the Old Testament which he read in the hearing of the people. *Gesenius*, ("Gesch.," *ut sup.*) while admitting that the ancient Hebrew gradually died out after the Captivity, affirms it to be certain "dass zu Nehemia's Zeit das Volk noch hebräisch redete (יְהוּדִית Neh. xiii. 24,)" though it may fairly be questioned whether this passage will bear the stress which he puts upon it. Either way, it is admitted on all hands that for a considerable time before the birth of Christ the ancient Hebrew had entirely ceased to be generally used among the Jews, and was then studied only by the learned as the venerable language of their sacred books.

universally admitted, that at least a century before the commencement of our era the ancient Hebrew had ceased to be used in writing, as it had previously ceased to be employed in speech;\* and that, while it continued to be studied by the learned as being the language of inspiration, it was, in the days of our Saviour, utterly unknown to the great majority of the Jewish people.† This being the case, it could not possibly have been in the ancient Hebrew that those quotations were made which occur in our Lord's addresses to the multitude, or which they employed at times in conversation with Him. Refer for an example of the first kind of quotation to Mark xii. 35-37, in which passage the Saviour is set before us teaching publicly in the temple, and introducing an Old Testament text into His discourse. "And Jesus answered and said," we read, "while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said unto

\* Even those admit this who maintain the late origin of Daniel, and some other canonical books. *De Wette* remarks: "Nach dem Exile verlor sich die hebräische Sprache nach und nach aus dem Munde des Volkes, und blieb nur noch als gelehrte und Schriftsprache übrig; und manche spätere Erzeugnisse der hebräischen Litteratur, z. B. Daniel, sind diesem kunstlichen Gebrauche derselben zu danken."—*Einkl. in das A. T.*, § 34; comp. Art. Hebräische Sprache, *Hertzog's* "Real-Encyc." It seems to me a strong argument against the hypothesis, so generally accepted by modern critics, that the Book of Daniel belongs to the age of Antiochus Epiphanes, that, as we formerly saw, the Jewish literature of that period was almost exclusively Greek. In spite of all that has been so powerfully urged on the other side, I hold that the Book of Daniel is a genuine product of the time of the Exile.

† Few, I conceive, will admit the assertion found in *Evangelical Christendom*, Sept. 1860, (p. 470,) that the prevailing language of Palestine in the times of our Lord and His apostles was such "as to allow still of the free use and reading of the Hebrew Scriptures in the synagogues, and of their being understood of the people generally."—*Non tali auxilio*, &c.

my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the *common people* (ὁ πολλὸς ὄχλος, who certainly knew nothing of ancient Hebrew) heard him gladly." Next, let us view the matter conversely, when the quotation from the Old Testament is made, not by Christ, but by the people. Referring to John vi. 31, for an example, we find the *multitude* (ὁ ὄχλος, ver. 24) addressing the Saviour in these words, "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat." They thus quoted familiarly from the Book of Psalms, and in what language was the quotation made? Certainly not in the *ancient Hebrew*; for as has been already shewn, that language was then utterly unknown to almost the whole body of the people.

But abandoning this first hypothesis, as all must of necessity do, many will be inclined to take their stand on the second, and maintain, that such quotations were made in Aramaic.\* This, however, may also be shewn to be an equally untenable opinion. We have no satisfactory evidence that a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures *ever* existed in the Syro-Chaldaic language. Frequent reference is no doubt made in the writings of modern biblical critics to ancient Targums, or translations and paraphrases of the Old Testament, which were formerly in use among the Jews. But, when we come to examine the matter, we find it is a mere

\* *Renan*, for instance, referring to the Targums, says: "It est probable que Jésus et ses premiers disciples se servaient de ces traductions; peut-être en fut il de même pour l'historien Josèphe."—*Histoire des Langues Sémitiques*, p. 220; comp. *Gesenius*, "Gesch. d. Heb. Spr.," § 21.

assumption that these existed in the days of our Saviour ; or that, if known at all, they circulated in a *written* form among the people. Can it be supposed that it was to such versions our Lord referred, when He said to His hearers, "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life ; and they are they which testify of me ?" These words evidently imply (whether the imperative, or indicative, rendering of ἐρευνᾶτε be adopted) that the people had easy and familiar access to the inspired writings, and that they could read and compare these, from beginning to end, without any dependence on rabbinical or sacerdotal aid. Now, what proof is there that an Aramaic version of the Scriptures was then current among them ? What ground is there to believe that the ancient Hebrew writings, which were then a sealed book to the commonalty among the Jews, had been so fairly and fully rendered into the popular dialect, and were in this form so generally read among the people, that our Lord can be regarded as referring to such a version, when He used the words which have been quoted, and said to His hearers, "Search the scriptures ?" Not the slightest trace of such a version is to be met with in the New Testament, unless, as some have fancied, Matt. xxvii. 46 contains a proof of its existence \*—truly a somewhat slender foundation on which to rest such a hypothesis ;—and not the least acquaintance with it is indicated by Josephus, unless the dream of Pfannkuche be accepted as a sober reality, that the Jewish historian, in using the Septuagint translation, was dependent after all, as his Alexandrine

\* "Eine Spur targumischer Uebersetzung Matt. xxvii. 46."—*De Wette, Einl. in das A. T.*, § 57.



predecessors had been, on ancient Targums of the Hebrew Scriptures.\* The only approach which is made to an argument for the existence of such a version, is found in these two statements—that some ancient *Chaldee* translations of parts of the Hebrew Bible are extant at the present day, and that there is reason to suppose, from the necessities of the case, that such written translations existed before and at the date of our Saviour's sojourn upon the earth.

Let us look a little more closely at these two points.

By far the oldest existing Targums are those of Onkelos and Jonathan. Much doubt rests upon the time when these were composed, but they are generally placed about the second century after Christ.† Some have assigned them an earlier, and others a much later origin; but it is at all events certain that neither the one nor the other existed before the first century of our era. As has been said, they are entirely ignored both by Josephus and the writers of the New Testament, to whom may now be added the ancient fathers of the Church, even Origen and Jerome, who were acquainted with Hebrew literature. They are written in Chaldee, the language of Onkelos being very pure, while that of Jonathan is more corrupt. The Targum of Onkelos is a faithful translation of the

\* This opinion has been countenanced by some other scholars, but rests upon no solid foundation. *Frankel*, chief rabbi of the Jewish Church in Dresden and Leipzig, has shewn that it furnishes no satisfactory explanation of the differences between the Septuagint and the Hebrew text. See his "Vorstudien zu der Septuaginta," pp. xv, 37, &c.

† *Max Müller* may be regarded as expressing the *average* opinion of scholars on this point when he says, in reference to the Targums, "The most ancient are those of Onkelos and Jonathan, in the second century after Christ."—*Lectures on Language*, p. 264.

Five Books of Moses, following the original text very closely, except in the explanations of figurative language which it admits, and its avoidance of anthropopathic and indelicate expressions. The Targum of Jonathan on the Prophets is a much more paraphrastic work ; and, although deemed by a few more ancient than that of Onkelos, seems to bear evidence, in its internal character, that it was composed at a somewhat later date.

These are all the remains of the most ancient Jewish translations which we possess, or of which we can trace almost the slightest indication. Some rabbinical notices occur of a supposed version of Job about the middle of the first century ;\* and hence it has been inferred by a great number of writers, that the other books of the Old Testament had also been translated. But the very earliest date at which it can be affirmed, with any pretence to proof, that a written Chaldee translation of any part of the Hebrew Scriptures existed, is the middle of the first century. The learned German scholar Zunz, who has so thoroughly investigated this whole subject, assigns the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan to that date ;† and in the absence of all positive evidence as to the exact period of their formation, this may be allowed. But, in my humble judgment, it is quite arbitrary when he asserts

\* *De Wette*, ut sup., § 57 ; and *Zunz*, "Vorträge," p. 61.

† After noticing the causes which he conceives to have long prevented the formation of *written* Chaldee versions, he says : "Endlich aber erblickte man doch eine glückliche Lösung der Aufgabe, sich gleich weit von Zusätzen als von buchstäblichen Übertragung zu halten, in der während der ersten Hälfte des ersten Jahrhunderts angefertigten Übersetzungen des Gesetzes und der Propheten durch Onkelos den Proselyten und Jonathan ben Uziel einen Schüler Hillels."—*Zunz*, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, p. 62.

on the previous page, that "beyond doubt written translations of the most of the sacred books had existed in Aramaic even during the times of the Maccabees."\* If it were so, all *proof* at least is wanting. And when we reflect that even before the times of the Maccabees, as was formerly shewn, the Greek language had obtained a wide prevalence in Palestine, and remember that the Septuagint version of the Scriptures was probably completed by the end of the third century before Christ, we shall perhaps not feel that stringent necessity for written Aramaic translations, which has been so much pressed by many critics. After the Hebrew ceased to be a living language, it was of course necessary, when the Old Testament was read in the original in the synagogues, that it should be accompanied by a translation into either Greek or Aramaic. But from the currency which had already been gained by the version of the LXX. in Palestine, as appears from the later apocryphal literature, there was no necessity, even from the time of Antiochus Epiphanes downwards, that *written* Aramaic translations should be prepared and circulated among the people. And accordingly, there is no proof that any such were then in existence.

In like manner, while there must, in our Saviour's time, have been *some* written version of the Scriptures current among the people, as both His and their frequent references to the Old Testament prove; there is no evidence whatever, that they at any time possessed such a version in the Syro-Chaldaic language.

\* "Geschriebene aramäische Übersetzungen der meisten Biblischen Bücher hat es sicherlich schon unter den Hasmonäern gegeben."—*Zunz*, ut sup., p. 61.

It seems quite inconceivable that, if the Old Testament had then been in their hands in an Aramaic form, (as was, of course, the case, if Christ's exhortation to "Search the scriptures," referred to the sacred books in that language,) all traces of such a version should so utterly have disappeared. In fact, there is nothing except the necessity which certainly then existed among the Jews, of their possessing the Sacred Scriptures in a language more generally known than the ancient Hebrew, that gives any countenance to the idea that an Aramaic version of the Old Testament was then current among them ; and we have now to consider whether that necessity may not be shewn to have been met in another and better way than by assuming the existence of a translation which has left no trace, either of its origin or its influence, in the literature of antiquity.

As has been already remarked, I hold that when the Saviour quoted the Scriptures of the Old Testament in His popular addresses, or when the people did so in conversation with Him or His disciples, such quotations were invariably made, more or less exactly, from the Septuagint translation. We know that this Greek version of the whole of the ancient Scriptures had existed for long before the times of Christ. And we possess the clearest evidence, both in the writings of Josephus and in the several books of the New Testament, how commonly it was employed by the Jews of Palestine. We find, in fact, that most of the quotations which occur in the Gospels agree almost *verbatim* with the rendering of the Septuagint ; and that those are very few indeed which seem to depart from its phraseology, and follow more closely the original



text.\* There is not a single passage presenting such variations, but may, after all, be regarded as derived from the Greek version. The differences in question are easily accounted for, on the ground either of the citations having been made from memory, or of a somewhat different text of the LXX. having been followed from that which is current at the present day ; or by taking into consideration the undoubted fact, that our Lord and His apostles often introduced into their quotations from the Old Testament a few words which did not exist in the original, or gave the passage quoted a higher or more special significance than it may have at first possessed.

And thus at length we understand how the Saviour could have addressed to the Jews at large such a precept as "Search the scriptures." That precept, as all must acknowledge, could not have referred to the inspired books in their original language. And even though it be admitted without sufficient evidence that written *Chaldee* translations of some parts of Scripture then existed, that does not much help the matter ; for Chaldee, such as that of the most ancient Targums, was certainly not then the familiar language of the Jewish people. Some of the most eminent Oriental scholars, both at home and abroad, are agreed on this point, although it is common enough to find vague statements in the works of biblical critics, to the effect that Chaldee was then the prevailing language of Palestine. A learned German writer has brought out very clearly

\* See the question as to these and other Old Testament citations occurring in the New Testament, more fully noticed in Chapter VII. of this work ; and compare *Grinfield's* "Apology for the Septuagint," *passim*.

the fact that the language neither of Onkelos nor Jonathan represents the vulgar tongue of the inhabitants of Palestine in the times of Christ and His Apostles.\* In this opinion he is followed by M. Renan,† and was indeed, long before anticipated by our own Lightfoot, as will be plain from the following sentences from the writings of that illustrious Hebrew and Rabbinical scholar.

Having stated "that Jonathan the son of Uzziel, a scholar of Hillel, about the time of Christ's birth, rendered all the Prophets into the Chaldee language," and given some reasons why this translation was not made into *Syriac*, he adds, "None knew the (ancient) Hebrew but such as learned it by study. However, therefore, all the Jews inhabiting the land of Canaan did not so readily understand the Chaldee language as the Syriac, which was their mother-language, yet they much more readily understood that than the Hebrew, which to the unlearned was not known at all. Hence, it was not without necessity that the Prophets were turned into the Chaldee language by Jonathan, and the Law not much after by Onkelos, that they might a

\* "Die Sprache der Paraphrasen, die nicht die Volkssprache der gewöhnlichen Juden repräsentirt, ist aramäisch, wie es auch ausserhalb Babylonien zu finden war. Die gewöhnliche jüd. Sprache war weder in Babylonien noch in Palästina, die rein-aramäische, sondern in Palästina die palästinisch-aramäisch-hebräische und in Babylonien die babylonisch-aramäisch-hebräische (in welchen beiden die beiden Talmuden geschrieben sind) und überhaupt ist kein babylonischer, von dem syrischen verschiedener Dialect für jene Zeit erwiesen."—*Fürst's Lehrgebäude der aramäischen Idiome*, p. 5.

† "On admettant généralement jusqu'ici que la langue des Targums représentait à peu près la langue vulgaire de la Palestine à l'époque du Christ. M. Fürst a élevé contre ce sentiment d'assez graves difficultés. En effet, la paraphrase d'Onkelos est le plus pur monument que nous ayons de la langue Araméenne ; or il est difficile de croire que le peuple de la Palestine parlât un idiome aussi dégagé d'Hebraïsmes."—*Renan, Hist. des Lang. Sémit.*, p. 220 ; comp. pp. 226 7.

little be understood by the common people, by whom the Hebrew original was not known at all." \*

It is perfectly obvious that the words, Ἑρουνάτε τὰς γραφὰς, could never have been addressed by Christ to the people, if they had had access to these scriptures only in a language which they but "a little understood;" and as we have no evidence whatever that, in addition to these disputed, and but little available, Chaldee Targums, the Old Testament was then generally current in *any other version* than that of the SEPTUAGINT, we must conclude that our Lord's words referred to it—that His quotations were made from it—that it, in fact, then constituted the *people's Bible* in Palestine,—and that, therefore, they must have been thoroughly familiar with the Greek language.

\* *Lightfoot's* "Horæ Hebraicæ," ii., p. 20, *Gundell's* edit., Oxford, 1859. It will be observed that Lightfoot speaks in this passage of *Syriac* as having been the popular language of Palestine in the time of Christ. His authority on all points of Hebrew learning stands deservedly high, and has been greatly deferred to by biblical critics in this country, but they have completely departed from his views respecting this matter. Instead of saying with him that Chaldee was but "a little understood" by the Jews of our Saviour's day, they have even identified that language with the *Hebrew* referred to in the New Testament as made use of by the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (See, e.g., *Conybe. and Howson*, vol. i., 38; *Alford* on Matt. xxvii. 46, and many others.) Yet, while we are told by these writers on one page that *Chaldee* was the "Hebrew" of the Testament, we read on another page that *Syro-Chaldaic* constituted the language in question. (Comp. *Conybe. and Howson*, vol. i., 3; and *Alford* on Acts xxi. 40.) The truth seems to be, that neither the eastern branch of the Aramaic language, (Chaldee,) nor the western branch, (Syriac,) but a *mixture of both these dialects with the ancient Hebrew*, formed the popular "Hebrew" of our Lord's time; and that, therefore, no translations of the Old Testament, either in Chaldee or Syriac, would have been more than, as Lightfoot remarks respecting versions in the former language, "a little understood" among the people. Some have maintained that the Syriac and Chaldee languages were all but identical. See, e.g., "Abhandlung von der syrischen Sprache," by *J. D. Michaelis*, p. 52.

Leaving this point, let us next glance at the account contained in the fourth chapter of St John's Gospel of our Lord's conversation with the woman of Samaria. Was that discourse carried on in Hebrew or Greek? Here, again, most readers will probably be inclined to say at once that it was Hebrew, influenced unwittingly by the prepossessions which prevail upon the subject. But I have no hesitation in maintaining the contrary opinion, and affirming that the conversation was conducted in the same language in which it has been preserved by the evangelist. I do so, both on account of what we may infer from other sources, respecting the prevailing language of Samaria at the time, and what we are led to gather on the point in question from the special features and indications which the discourse itself presents.

It appears very evident, both from the Second Book of Maccabees, and from Josephus, how eager the Samaritans were to yield to those Hellenic influences which were so powerfully at work in Palestine for some generations before the birth of Christ. We are told (2 Macc. vi. 2) that in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim was dedicated to Jupiter Xenius, "according to the *wish* of the inhabitants of the place." And the Jewish historian, referring to the same event, gives a full account (Antiq., xii., 5, 5) of the revolt of the Samaritans at that time from all that was peculiarly Jewish. They addressed Antiochus in the most adulatory and even idolatrous terms, entreating the king to regard them as "aliens from the nation and customs of the Jews," and begging that their temple, which, they declared, had, as yet, no name at all, should be deno-



minated after Jupiter Hellenius. To this memorial, as was to be expected, Antiochus returned a gracious answer. He readily granted the request they had made respecting their temple;\* and in his answer spoke of them as “desiring to live according to *the customs of the Greeks*.” It thus appears, that, from the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, the inhabitants of Samaria had become thoroughly Hellenized; and it cannot be doubted that, as an essential part of their Hellenism, they readily adopted the Greek language. Like the other natives of Palestine they became *bilinguals*, their national dialect still continuing to exist,† but being overshadowed by the more prevalent tongue of Greece. In these circumstances, it is easy to see that the Jews, in any necessary intercourse which they had with the Samaritans, would not be likely to employ the form of speech peculiar to either people, but

\* It will be noticed that there is a slight discrepancy between the statements made in the Second Book of Maccabees and by Josephus, respecting the name which was given to the Samaritan temple. According to the one authority it was called Jupiter Xenius, according to the other Jupiter Hellenius. But both agree as to the essential fact, which indicates the decided Greek and Gentile tendencies then prevalent among the Samaritans.

† The Samaritan dialect, like the Jewish, consisted of a mixture of the Aramaic and Hebrew languages. (*Fürst*, “*Lehrgr. der aram. Idiom.*,” p. 16.) The only specimens of it extant are furnished by the translation of the Pentateuch, (of which the date is unknown,) and some sacred poetry. See *Gesenius*, ut sup., § 24; and *De Wette*, §§ 32, 63. *Renan* observes on this point: “La version du Pentateuque, le plus anciens des écrits Samaritains que nous restent, version que la plupart des critiques rapportent au 1<sup>er</sup> siècle de notre ère, et où se trahit l’influence du Targum d’Onkelos, présente de si nombreux Arabismes, qu’on est forcé d’admettre qu’elle a subi retouche après l’Islamisme. Un savant (*M. Frankel*) a même osé soutenir, et non sans de bonnes raisons, qu’elle n’avait été composée que depuis cette époque.”—*Renan*, ut sup., p. 232. He adds the caution: “Il ne faut pas confondre cette version avec le text Hébreu du Pentateuque en caractères Samaritains, que possèdent aussi les Samaritains.”

would make use of that one which was common to both ; so that the conversation which our Lord now entered into with a woman of Samaria, would be carried on, neither in the Galilean nor Samaritan dialect of Hebrew, but in the Greek language.

Next, however, let the discourse speak for itself. It is evident to any one who reads it, that the evangelist takes all pains to report the conversation very *accurately*, in whatever language it may be supposed to have been conducted. This is plain, among other proofs, from the 25th verse, which reads as follows : "The woman saith unto him, I know that *Messias* cometh, *who is called Christ* ; when he is come, he will tell us all things." The best critics hold, I believe correctly, that the parenthetical clause in this verse (ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός) is not an explanation of the evangelist, but was really uttered by the woman herself. And if so, the point is settled : she spoke in Greek. But, even taking the opposite view, that these words were inserted by the evangelist, we can account for his having taken the trouble to do this, instead of at once using the equivalent Greek term *Christ*, in relating the woman's portion of the dialogue, *only* by taking into account his extreme desire to report exactly the very terms which were employed. And in that case, why does he make the woman speak of *Christ*, and not *Messiah*, in ver. 29, and the men of the city declare in ver. 42, "We know that this is indeed the *Christ*, the Saviour of the world?" It is obvious that, in these two verses, the apostle represents the Samaritans as employing the Greek term Χριστός ; it is also plain, from the accuracy with which he is writing, that he would not have done this, had they not actually

used it ; so that, even though the more improbable view be taken of the explanatory clause in ver. 25, it still remains clear that Greek was familiarly used among the Samaritans, and that this conversation therefore was probably carried on in that language. But this probability becomes a certainty, when we take into consideration what has already been proved respecting the long-continued Hellenic tendencies of the Samaritans ; and thus we find, in the passage under review, what can hardly fail to be regarded as another undoubted example of our Lord's employment of the Greek language.

Turning now for a little to another part of the Gospel of John, we read (chap. xii. 20, 21) as follows : "And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast : the same came therefore to Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus." It cannot be doubted for a moment, that these Greeks (*Ἕλληνες*) spoke the Greek language. And it can as little be doubted that *one* at least of the disciples of Jesus understood them when they thus addressed him. Nor have we any reason to suppose that this constituted a peculiarity in the case of Philip. Bethsaida was the native place of Andrew and Peter, no less than of Philip ; while the whole of the apostles probably belonged to Galilee. And if, as seems to me almost unquestionable, the request of these Greeks was, at least in substance, granted,\* and they were now admitted

\* It is doubtful what was the exact object of the desire which these Greeks expressed "to see Jesus." Some, like Alford, (in loc.,) have held very decidedly that it was a *private* interview which they requested ; and if so, that certainly was not granted. But be this as it may, it seems to me altogether opposed to our Lord's habitual conduct

for the moment to share in the privileges of Christ's disciples, the discourse which followed *must* have been spoken in the Greek language. But, let the conclusion to which such a supposition necessarily leads be observed. Jesus was then in Jerusalem, surrounded by a multitude of the inhabitants of the city. These evidently understood, with the greatest ease, the words which He now spoke, when He proceeded in their hearing to tell of His approaching death, and of the effects which it would accomplish. And conceiving of both Jews and Greeks as listening to the discourse which was then delivered, (ver. 23-36,) a great additional significance seems to be imparted to some declarations which it contains. It sets forth concisely, but clearly, the necessity of Christ's sufferings—the abundant fruit which these would produce—the happiness and honour insured to all who should follow Him—the devotedness to the Father's will which characterised all that the Son endured—the victory which was speedily to be gained over Satan—the extension of the blessings of salvation to men of every country and condition upon earth—and the happiness of those who rightly improved the privileges with which they were favoured. Nothing could be imagined more congruent to the circumstances of the case, if these Greeks, as the

towards the inquiring, to suppose that He did not, in some way, grant their earnest and respectful desire. If their words be regarded as pointing to a private interview with Jesus, their object in seeking it could only have been to inquire into the bearing of His work on the Gentile race to whom they belonged, and to obtain some information as to the way in which, without being Jews, they might profit by His instructions. If this was in truth the motive which prompted their request, it is interesting to observe, in the following discourse of Jesus, how He who "knew what was in man" suited the words which He uttered to the wishes of their hearts.



representatives of the heathen world, then formed part of the audience who listened to the words of our Saviour. They thus received a gracious answer to those questions which perhaps they desired to put to Him ; they heard from His own lips that the results of His great work were to be enjoyed by all nations ; and they received hints which might suffice to convince them of its sublime and majestic scope, both with respect to heaven and earth. The question then recurs—Were they *present* on this occasion, or were they not ? It is, I believe, almost incredible that they were not ; and that thus they alone of all that ever addressed the Saviour, received no answer whatever to the request which they had preferred. It was not thus that He acted, of whom it was written by the prophet, as the words are applied by St Matthew (chap. xii. 20, 21), “A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory ; and *in his name shall the Gentiles trust.*” But then, if these Greeks were present at this time, the Saviour undoubtedly spoke so as to be understood by them, that is, in their own language. Yet, in doing this, He was evidently well understood also by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, (ver. 34, ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ ὁ ὄχλος,) who formed, in fact, by far the largest portion of His audience ; and it is thus again made perfectly certain that the Jews of our Lord’s day were thoroughly familiar with the Greek language.

I now proceed to direct the reader’s attention to a part of the evangelic history which bears the clearest and most conclusive testimony to the validity of that position which it is the object of this work to estab-

lish. I refer to those passages in all the four Gospels which record the conversations that were carried on between our Lord and Pilate on the one hand, and between Pilate and the populace on the other, when the Saviour was brought before him for judgment. No one will venture to maintain that the Roman governor either understood or employed Hebrew, nor will many be inclined to suppose that Latin was used by our Lord or the Jews in their intercourse with Pilate. The only other supposition is that *Greek* was the language employed by all the parties in question ; unless, indeed, it be assumed that an interpreter was employed between them. And it must be allowed by all who are inclined to adopt this view, that it involves, at least, quite a gratuitous assumption. There is not the slightest trace of any such personage in the narrative, and it is, therefore, rather to cut the knot than untie it when this explanation is suggested.\* But I have no hesitation in saying, that the idea of an interpreter being employed in the scenes referred to, is not only gratuitous, but absurd. This will, I think, appear plain to every reader, from even the slightest consideration of the narrative of the evangelists. Referring, for example, to the Gospel of St Matthew, (chap. xxvii. 11-14,) we have first an account of the interview between Christ and Pilate as follows : "And Jesus stood before the governor : and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews ?

\* *Credner* justly remarks on this point : " Auch findet sich nirgends die geringste Spur, dass sich Jesus im Verkehr mit Griechisch Redenden oder vor Gericht eines Dolmetschers bedient hätte, woraus denn hervorgeht, dass von den Verfassern unserer Evangelien jene Bekanntschaft der Palästinenser mit der Griechischen Sprache als etwas ganz Gewöhnliches überall vorausgesetzt wird."—*Einl. in das N.T.*, § 77.

And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly." Now, is it not manifest that, as here set before us, the Saviour, the governor, and the chief priests and elders, are represented as having made use of a common language? Can any one believe that it was through an *interpreter* that Pilate listened to the accusations of the enemies of Christ; and again that through an interpreter he said to our Lord—"Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?" Is it not at once apparent from the narrative, that one tongue was then employed by all the various speakers? And if so, is it not manifest that that could have been no other than the Greek language?

Still, however improbable, it is perhaps yet within the bounds of possibility, that an interpreter *was* then employed. And even if it be granted that such was not the case, it may be said that though Greek was well known to Pilate and the chief priests and scribes, this does not prove that it was generally understood, or commonly employed among the people. But let us proceed with the narrative. We read (ver. 15-25) as follows: "Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered

him. When he was set down on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man : for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you ? They said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus who is called Christ ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person : see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children." Can any one read over this passage and believe that an interpreter was employed between the governor and the multitude ? can any one yield for a moment to the supposition that these rapid and passionate questionings and exclamations, which were now exchanged between Pilate and the populace, were not expressed in a common language, but by the roundabout process of interpretation ? If so, I despair of producing any effect upon his mind by argument. But if not so, the position is again won for which I contend : if the governor and the people are admitted to have conversed in a common language, the inference is plain—that language was *Greek*, and the COMMON PEOPLE of Jerusalem were then quite habituated to its employment.

On turning to the accounts of the same transaction, which are contained in the other evangelists, we find



that they all bear testimony to the correctness of that conclusion which has already been reached. In St Mark's Gospel, (chap. xv. 8,) we are told that "the multitude (ὁ ὄχλος) crying aloud began to desire Pilate to do as he had ever done unto them." And did not the governor understand that cry, until he had consulted his interpreter—an invisible personage who never makes his presence known in the narrative, and whose precarious existence is entirely dependent on the imagination of certain critics? \* At any rate, it is unquestionable that Pilate lost no time in replying to the excited populace; for we immediately read (ver. 9) that he "answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?" And the evangelist then repeats the account of that conversation between the Roman ruler and the people of Jerusalem which has already been given us by St Matthew. In the parallel passage of St Luke's Gospel we read, (chap. xxiii. 13, 14,) that "Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the *people*, said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people; and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him;" from which it is plain, that priests and people were simultaneously addressed by the governor in a language which all understood. And if we look to the supplementary accounts of the same events which are

\* "What language, then, did our Lord use before Pilate? or what did Pilate use himself? The answer to these questions does not give us any concern. An interpreter may have been used, although not mentioned," &c.—*Evan. Chr.*, ut sup., May 1860, p. 287. The writer forgets to ask, What language did the *populace* employ on the occasion in question?

contained in the Gospel of St John, we find new and most convincing proof that no interpreter could have been used between Pilate and the people, in the various intercourse which they had on this occasion. We are told (chap. xviii. 38-40) that after some conversation with the prisoner before him, Pilate "went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover : will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews ? Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas." Now, I ask again, Is it possible to interpolate into this record the idea of an interpreter, who was employed between Pilate and the people ? Or, can such a supposition be tolerated for a moment, when we advance a little in the narrative, and read (chap. xix. 4-7), "Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man ! When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him : for I find no fault in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." It does not require a word here to prove, that Pilate and the *people* of the Jews conversed directly with each other ; and it follows from this, as a necessary consequence, that the inhabitants of Jerusalem were then perfectly accustomed to the use of the Greek language.

I shall next direct the reader's attention to a notice,

contained in the first two evangelists, of some remarks made by the bystanders around the cross, when our Lord exclaimed, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" We read in St Matthew's Gospel, (chap. xxvii. 47-49,) that "some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him." In the parallel passage in St Mark's Gospel, (chap. xv. 35, 36,) we read, that "some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias. And one of them ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down." Now, it humbly appears to me, that here, as so often, commentators have involved themselves in difficulty, by seeking after some other than the natural import of the words. It is agreed upon by almost all recent critics, that none but *Jews* could have uttered them;\* for, what would others, such as the Roman soldiers, to whom the words have sometimes been ascribed, either know or care about Elias? So far, I quite agree with the views now generally expressed by biblical interpreters. But then, they are almost equally unanimous in supposing that the words were spoken in bitter irony; and with that part of their exposition of the passage, I can find no reason to concur. On my mind the narrative leaves a decided impression, that the words were uttered in honest ignorance, without any intended mockery or perversion. As they stand

\* *Alford*, in loc., *De Wette*, and most others.

in St Mark, there is not the slightest foundation furnished for the opinion, that they were spoken in derision ; and had they been so, we can hardly suppose that that evangelist would have dropped the οὗτος which occurs in St Matthew, and which is referred to by many, as denoting the sarcastic spirit in which the words were uttered. St Mark, more than any of the evangelists, furnishes us with minute hints as to the real circumstances in which events recorded in the Gospel-narrative occurred ; and would not, we may believe, have failed to do so on this occasion, had there really been any such sting in the word οὗτος as some have supposed. And let it be observed that, as we learn from Matthew, it was "one of THEM" (εἷς ἐξ αὐτῶν) who exclaimed, "This man calleth for Elias," that now ran and procured the vinegar with which to moisten the dying lips of our Saviour. There can be no doubt that this man acted, not in a spirit of malignity, but compassion ; for, as we infer from St John's Gospel, (chap. xix. 29,) his conduct was prompted by our Lord's pathetic exclamation, "I thirst."\* And, as we learn from St Mark's account, (ver. 36,) it was he who (first) exclaimed, as he performed that act of kindness, "Let alone ; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down ;" while, as we gather from St Matthew's narrative, (ver. 49,) his companions echoed his exclamation, saying, "Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him." Now, why should we suppose that the words which were certainly spoken by one in an earnest spirit, were repeated by

\* It seems to be a previous, and quite different, incident which is recorded in Luke xxiii. 36, so that the argument which *Calmet* and others build upon this passage, to the effect that the words under consideration must be referred to the Roman soldiers, falls to the ground.



the others in mockery and derision? The only exegetical ground on which it is attempted to put this construction on the language of St Matthew's Gospel, is found in that evangelist's employment of the term οὗτος. This word, according to Alford, clearly indicates intended mockery. But it seems open to doubt, whether the learned writer has not laid undue stress upon this expression. Not to insist further on the fact, that it was one of the very persons that are conceived to have spoken in such tones of scorn, who immediately ran and exhibited his sympathy for the suffering Saviour, it may be simply replied that the employment of the pronoun οὗτος of itself settles nothing. No doubt that word is frequently used in the *classics*\* to denote contempt; but it is always plain from the connexion that such is the case. Here, however, it is merely *assumed* that mockery was intended by the word. There is nothing in the form of the sentence which indicates that such was the case. As well might it be argued, that the centurion, of whom we speedily read, intended to be sarcastic when he said, (ver. 54,) "Truly this man was the Son of God," as that such was the spirit in which the words under consideration were uttered, for the term οὗτος occurs in the very same position in both exclamations.†

\* *Winer*, in his section on the Demonstrative Pronouns, makes no reference to such a use of the word in the New Testament. See his "Gram. des Neut. Sprach.," pp. 142-7, sixth edition.

† Ver. 47, Ἠλίαν φωνεῖ οὗτος; ver. 54, Ἀληθῶς υἱὸς Θεοῦ ἦν οὗτος. *Olshausen* justly remarks, (in loc.,) "In the following verses, 47, et seq., it is mentioned that the bystanders misunderstood the exclamation of Christ. They thought He called for Elias, whom they expected as the forerunner of the Messiah. Several commentators have been disposed to regard these words as additional mockery, but this conclusion is not intimated by even one syllable."

And besides, the idea of mockery being intended by the Jews when they made such a jest of the Divine name, implies such open and dreadful blasphemy on their part, as to be altogether incredible. They might very well be regarded as heaping every indignity upon the Saviour; but, in order to do this, they would never have ventured to take liberties with that august name which they so deeply, and even superstitiously, venerated. Let it be remembered, moreover, that it was on a charge of *blasphemy* the Jews had got Christ himself condemned at the judgment-seat of Caiaphas; and how utterly improbable then does it appear, that they should themselves have so publicly rushed into the committal of the same sin, and dared so flagrantly, and indeed foolishly, to make a mock of the eternal name.\*

But why this attempt at investing the words in question with the character of mockery? Simply because preconceived notions prevent expositors from allowing them their natural interpretation. It is held correctly by most critics that the words were spoken by Jews; but then it is added, that Jews *must* have understood our Lord's exclamation; and therefore re-

\* This consideration seems to shew that Dean Ellicott, notwithstanding his fine exegetical tact, is here at fault. He uses the following very strong language:—"We shudder as we read that the words of that harrowing exclamation, words first spoken by the prophetic Psalmist, and the outward meaning of which no Jew could possibly have misunderstood, were studiously perverted by a Satanic malice, and that the most holy name of the eternal Father was used by the Jewish reproaches that stood around, as that wherewith they now dared to make a mock at the eternal Son."—*Ellicott's Historical Lectures on the Life of Christ*, p. 356. Surely, as above remarked, it is very unlikely that Jews, who had got our Lord condemned on the very ground of blasphemy, should now themselves so daringly have made a jest of the great name of that God whom they professed so highly to reverence.

course is had to the idea of mockery, in order to be able to attach any meaning whatever to the words. But if we allow the passage to produce its natural impression, we must derive from it what seems to many so obnoxious a conclusion, that some of the Jews did *not* understand the words which Christ employed. As before remarked, I think it not improbable that though recorded by the evangelists in the modern form, they were really uttered by the Saviour in ancient Hebrew. And in that case, no one will think it strange that they were misunderstood by the Jews around the cross. I am quite willing to rest in this view of the matter, and infer no more from the passage than what is well known from other sources, that the people at large were then totally unacquainted with ancient Hebrew. But if it be maintained that the words were spoken in Aramaic, the consequence must be accepted, that some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem did not even understand that form of the national dialect ; and that they must therefore have been entirely dependent, for every purpose, on their familiarity with the Greek language.

I shall only refer further, before closing this chapter, to the conversation recorded in the Gospel of St John, as having taken place between the newly-risen Redeemer, and His affectionate follower Mary Magdalene.\* We read (chap. xx. 14) that Mary, turning

\* I have passed over without remark the passage, John vii. 35, because it does not appear to me by any means decisive. The words of the Jews which it records, though they seem naturally to imply that our Lord was in the habit of speaking in Greek, and fit in thoroughly with that supposition, might certainly have been employed in strong irony, even though He had been accustomed to make use of the Hebrew language.

from the empty sepulchre, "saw Jesus standing, but knew not that it was Jesus." And then the narrative proceeds as follows (ver. 15-17): "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." Now, there is certainly one, and perhaps two, Hebrew terms preserved in this passage, neither of which would have any meaning, if the whole conversation had been carried on in that language. Jesus said to His affectionate follower, "Mary:"\* this word at once recalled to her those tones which she had of old loved so well: she recognized her beloved Master in the person who now stood beside her; and under the influence of deep emotion she said unto Him, "Rabboni," making use of the same language in which He had probably uttered her name. We see at once a beauty and significance in the employment and preservation of these Hebrew terms, if the rest of the conversation was in Greek; but, if it be supposed that the language used by Christ and Mary throughout was Hebrew, the meaning of these isolated expressions being retained in that tongue entirely disappears. According to the best texts, and

\* The Hebrew form of her name *Mariam* was probably the term employed by the Saviour, though the authority of the MSS. is much divided on this point.



prevailing MS. authority, the word 'Εβραϊστὶ should be inserted before Rabboni. And this renders the argument to be derived from the passage in favour of the usual employment of *Greek* by Christ and His disciples, still more evident; for why should the Evangelist remark that Hebrew was the language *now* used by Mary, if that was, in fact, the form of speech which she and her fellow-disciples generally employed? It must, I think, be difficult for any one to read over the entire passage in the original, without feeling that it leaves a deep impression in favour of the opinion that *Greek* was the language usually employed by Christ in discoursing with His followers, and that Hebrew was used only in their more private and familiar intercourse, or for special reasons, and on particular occasions.\*

Let us now look back, for a moment, on the evangelic history from its commencement to its close. At the very beginning of the Gospel narrative, (Matt. ii. 13, 15,) we are told of the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt, and of their stay in that country for a time, where it is certain that they must have employed the Greek language. We next find our Lord dwelling with His earthly parents at Nazareth in Galilee, (Matt.

\* The argument which I have derived from this passage has been pointed at even by some of those who incline to the views of Pfannkuche on the general question. Thus says Röhr, ("Palästina," Clark's Bib. Cab., Edin. 1843, p. 92,) "Mary, in her conversation with Christ, appears to have spoken Greek, until she understood that He was risen from the dead, when she addressed Him in the more common Aramæan, saying, Rabboni." This writer, like many others, does not see that the admission which he here makes is fatal to the theory which he maintains; for surely if the Aramæan had been *more common* in public intercourse among the Jews of that period than the Greek, it would at once have been used by Mary in addressing one whom she supposed to be "*the gardener*;" and there would have been no indication in the narrative that any other language was generally employed by the Saviour and His disciples.

ii. 23, Luke ii. 39, 40 ;) and so well known was that district, for a long time previous, as the habitation of multitudes of foreigners, that it is styled even in the First Book of Maccabees, "Galilee the abode of aliens," (*Γαλιλαία ἀλλοφύλων*, 1 Macc. v. 15,) and in the Gospel itself, "Galilee of the Gentiles," (*Γαλιλαία τῶν ἐθνῶν*, Matt. iv. 15.)\* In that region, full of well-known Greek cities, such as Gadara, Tiberias, and Cæsarea Philippi, the Saviour spent by far the greater portion both of His private and public life: there He chose His first disciples, Andrew and Peter and James and John; and there both He and they must have become familiar with the Greek language. Next we find our Lord opening His public ministry by a discourse delivered in Greek; and then we see Him employing that language in His addresses to the people generally; in His conversation with the woman of Samaria; in the discourse which He delivered in presence of those Greeks who sought an introduction to Him at Jerusalem; and in the interview which He had with one of His disciples, immediately after His resurrection. These points have, I believe, been proved; and if so, ALL is proved for which I contend. The Gospels bear witness from beginning to end, that Greek was the language generally employed by our blessed Saviour; and we have next to inquire how far this conclusion is confirmed by the succeeding book of the New Testament,—what testimony is borne by it as to the question whether the language, for the most part, employed by Christ was that also habitually made use of, after His departure, by His disciples.

\* Compare *Strabo*, "Geog.," lib. xvi., 34.

## CHAPTER V.

### SPECIAL PROOFS FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES THAT GREEK WAS THE PREVAILING LANGUAGE OF PALESTINE IN THE TIMES OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.

THE next portion of Scripture which we propose particularly to examine, is that very interesting and precious book which contains a brief account of the sayings and doings of some of the followers of Christ for the first thirty years after His ascension. It records a considerable variety of addresses which were delivered by them in Jerusalem, and thus presents a supply of materials for testing, as well as illustrating, the truth of that position which it is the design of this work to establish. The testimony which it bears in favour of the conclusion already reached on other grounds, is, I believe, very abundant and conclusive. In fact, it may be shewn that there is not a single chapter in the whole book having any reference to Palestine but lends its aid in confirming our proposition that Greek was then the language generally employed on all public occasions by the inhabitants of that country.

As a presumptive evidence of this it may be noticed, first of all, that it seems to be the habit of the writer

expressly to mention when any *other* language than Greek was employed. There are two occasions on which he informs us that the Hebrew or Aramaic tongue was made use of by those of whom he writes. In the account which is given of St Paul's address to the excited multitude at Jerusalem, the historian tells us, (chap. xxi. 40, xxii. 2,) that the apostle spoke to the Jews "in the Hebrew dialect," that is, in the ordinary Aramaic of the country. And in that narrative of his conversion which Paul gives before Agrippa, as recorded in the twenty-sixth chapter, we find him stating (ver. 14) that the words which, at that solemn crisis in his history, fell upon his ears from heaven, were also spoken "in the Hebrew dialect," that is, doubtless, as before, in the common everyday dialect of Palestine. These are the only two occasions throughout the book, on which Hebrew is spoken of as being employed. And it would seem to follow from the very fact that its use on these occasions is expressly mentioned, that it was not the ordinary form of speech then employed in public intercourse among the Jews. I do not indeed maintain that this presumption amounts to more than a slight probability. Remembering that St Luke in his Gospel (chap. viii. 54) gives the words addressed to Jairus' daughter in Greek, without any intimation that they were really spoken in Hebrew, and that he does not notice in his first account of St Paul's conversion (Acts, chap. ix.) that it was in Hebrew the Saviour spoke on that occasion, we are not to attach a great deal of importance to the point now under consideration. Still, the entire absence throughout the book of any hint to the effect that another language was used than the Greek,



except on the two occasions which have been specified, is certainly so far in favour of our proposition. It throws the burden of proof on such as maintain that there *were* times other than those specially mentioned by the historian, at which a different language was employed. If so, let them shew it; and if no proof of any kind can be produced, we naturally rest in the conclusion that the language in which the historian reports the various discourses was that in which they were actually delivered.

But let us now descend to particulars, and inquire if more definite and positive proof may not be found in our favour. Let us proceed to a consideration of the special circumstances in which the sermons and other addresses reported in this book were spoken, as well as the literary character with which they are severally impressed; and we shall find, I believe, most clear and conclusive evidence that Greek *was* the language habitually employed by the apostles in proclaiming their message, whether at Antioch or Athens, at Jerusalem or Rome.

Beginning, then, with a reference to the second chapter of the Acts,\* let us reflect for a little on the statements made by the sacred writer in connexion with the events related to have occurred at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. There are several points to be noticed in this narrative which serve to confirm our affirmation, that Greek was then familiarly known, and commonly used, by almost all Jews, whether dwelling *in* or *beyond* Palestine. We read as follows respecting the multitude then assembled in Jerusalem, (chap. ii. 5-11 :) "And there were dwelling at Jeru-

\* The *first* Chapter is specially noticed afterwards in Chap. VIII.

salem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad," (or rather, "when this sound was heard,") "the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilæans? and how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." With regard to the phenomenon thus described, it is plain, I think, in the first place, that the sacred historian means to convey to us the idea, that by a miraculous power then conferred upon the apostles, the various representatives of so many different nations then assembled in Jerusalem, did all hear themselves addressed in their own vernacular languages. In some cases probably there were only differences of dialect among them; but at any rate, each nation heard itself addressed in what was deemed its own peculiar tongue. I believe, in spite of all the efforts which have been made by a certain school of critics, both at home and abroad, to explain away the miracle,\* that, if the fact

\* A comprehensive account of these various attempts by foreign critics (followed by some in this country) is given by *De Wette*, "Exeg. Handbuch Apostg.," pp. 18-26. The various arguments there enumerated seem amply sufficient to prove that the object of the miracle was certainly not to enable the apostles to preach the gospel, but are very far from invalidating the reality of the miracle as formerly explained.

just mentioned is not implied in the words of the writer, it is impossible to convey it by means of any words whatever. But while fully admitting, and earnestly contending for this, it is, I think, equally plain, in the second place, that it was not for the purpose of enabling them to proclaim to these people the way of salvation that the apostles were now endowed with the power which has been mentioned. This was formerly shewn from the nature of the case, and from the facts of subsequent apostolic history,\* but it also appears from the point now more especially soliciting our attention, that all these different tribes did in truth possess a *common language*. Two facts recorded in the narrative seem to make this undeniable. It appears first from the incidental remark of the historian that they all expressed astonishment among themselves on account of the wonder which had just been witnessed. "They were all amazed," we are told, "and marvelled, saying, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilæans? And how hear we *every man in our own tongue*, wherein we were born? . . . . We do hear them speak *in our tongues* the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?" their previous questionings having led to no satisfactory explanation. Now, it seems a fair and necessary inference from this account, that they all possessed a common language. Two or more men of the same nation *would* not have expressed their mutual wonder in such terms as are here employed; and the multitude in general, to whom the words which have been quoted are evidently to be ascribed,

\* See above, Chap. III., pp. 68-74.

*could* not have expressed such wonder, unless they had possessed a common medium of conversation. It is plain, then, that, in addition to the knowledge of their own proper language or dialect which the various tribes possessed, they must also have known Greek, the world's language, and thus been able to communicate with one another.

But again, the same conclusion is derived from the fact afterwards stated, or at least to my mind clearly implied, that Peter addressed the whole multitude at one time in the same language, and that they all understood him. His sermon, which immediately followed the scene just described, *must* have been delivered in the Greek language. Had he spoken in Hebrew, he would have been intelligible to only the merest fraction of his hearers; but, since it was proved by the result—the conversion of no less than three thousand—that they had all understood him, it is plain that he must have used a form of speech familiar to them all, and that could only be the Greek language.\* In entire con-

\* I have said above oftener than once that the language common to all then addressed by the apostle could be no other than Greek. But, singularly enough, some have ventured to assert that the common language in question was the Aramaic. Thus *Pressensé*, while taking much the same view of the gift of tongues as has been given in this work, makes the following remark:—"On ne comprend pas d'abord le but du miracle, car les Juifs étrangers qui étaient à Jérusalem *comprenaient tous la langue Araméenne*."—*Histoire des Trois Premiers Siècles*, vol. i., p. 486. Was it then the Greek or Aramaic which was really the language common to all those "Jews out of every nation under heaven?" This is surely a question which it is not difficult to answer. I should think that, if any argument be required at all on the subject, it must be enough to convince every one that Aramaic could *not* have been the language in question, that we find in the list of those addressed by the Apostle, "men of *Cyrene*, and strangers of *Rome*, Jews and PROSELYTES." Will any one maintain that these persons understood or employed Hebrew?



sistency with this conclusion, we find that the quotations from the Old Testament, introduced by the apostle into his discourse, agree for the most part with the phraseology of the Septuagint, presenting only those slight variations, omissions, and additions, which would naturally occur in the case of one quoting from memory, and which are generally found in the citations made by the writers of the New Testament. The very fact that such variations are *preserved*, while shewing the accuracy of the inspired narrator, also tends to prove that the quotations were actually made in the language in which they are presented to us by the sacred historian. Had they been made in Hebrew, they would either have been given in such Greek as exactly represented the original, or, if the reporter thought it advisable to adopt the Septuagint rendering, he would have done so accurately and consistently, and not with those strange deviations, which, in this and other passages of the New Testament, are so apparent. We can easily understand how the apostle, quoting from memory, and at the same time empowered by the Holy Ghost operating within him, to give a paraphrase or explanation, as suited his purpose, of the texts which he quoted, should sometimes have departed from the exact words of the LXX. ; but it seems impossible to conceive that, if St Peter had really made these quotations from the Hebrew, St Luke in reporting his words, and having abundant means of doing so correctly, would not either have given an exact version from the original, or been careful to adopt the generally received rendering which he found in the Septuagint. There can then, I believe, be no doubt whatever, that the citations from the Old Testament,

here imbedded in St Peter's speech, were actually made as still set before us by his inspired reporter—that he used the Greek version as alone intelligible to the vast majority of his hearers, and that the whole sermon which he at this time delivered was spoken as we still possess it—in the GREEK language.

Nor can there be the least doubt that both the native and foreign Jews were *simultaneously* addressed on this occasion. This appears very plainly, among other proofs, from the exordium of the apostle. He begins his address thus—"Ye men of Judea, (*"Ἄνδρες Ἰουδαῖοι,*) and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, (*καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἅπαντες,*) be this known unto you," &c ; and by these different appellations he can only mean, as is agreed by all critics, the native Jews who were regularly resident in Jerusalem, and the temporary sojourners from other countries. Both classes were among his hearers ; both were addressed in the same speech ; and that speech was delivered in the Greek language. Can any one of these statements be controverted or refuted ? If so, let the argument which I build upon them fall to the ground. But if not so, if it must be admitted that we have here a clear instance of a Jew of Palestine addressing, among others, Jews of Palestine in the *Greek* language, and so understood by them that a vast multitude repented and believed, the inference is surely manifest, that Greek was then thoroughly familiar to the inhabitants of that country, and was regarded by them as a most fitting medium, in which either to convey or receive instruction.\*

\* There is much reticence among the commentators generally, as to the language in which they conceive this address of Peter to have been delivered. With the usual vacillation and inconsistency which are

If it be admitted then, as I believe it must be, that the sermon of Peter, just considered, was really uttered in Greek, we have obtained a valuable *point d'appui*, from which to proceed to a consideration of the speeches which immediately follow. It is hardly to be supposed that another language would be made use of by the Apostle in his address recorded in the third chapter, as having been delivered to the people in the temple, than that which had already been employed. We read, (chap. iii. 11,) that on the occasion of the excitement which prevailed among the multitude, when the lame man was healed, Peter addressed a long discourse to the people; and, if we have already found that these very people, or their fellow-citizens, had been shortly before addressed by the same Apostle in Greek, the burden of proof falls heavily on those who assert that he now employed another language. No intimation to that effect is given by the sacred historian. On the contrary, the whole discourse (chap. iii. 12-26) proceeds as if given exactly in the form in which it was actually spoken. It contains two quotations from the Old Testament, (ver. 22-25,) both of which seem manifestly borrowed from the Septuagint. They differ, no doubt, in several expressions which they

found to prevail on the general question under consideration, it is not uncommon to meet with statements, in critical expositions of this passage, which seem at one moment to suppose that the apostle spoke in Greek, and the next, that he spoke in Hebrew. Even *Alford* appears to fall into some confusion on this point, unless (which I can hardly suppose) he believes that the discourse was really delivered in the Hebrew language. (See his comment on the term *ᾠδὴς*, ver. 24.) Very few writers have expressly asserted this, but many have taken it for granted; and some have expressed themselves like *Dr Schaff*, when he says, "History of the Apostolic Church," p. 241, that "Peter's discourse to the assembled multitude was delivered *probably* in the Hebrew language."

contain, from the precise words of the LXX.; but, in so differing, they do not approach nearer to the Hebrew. In what language, then, were they cited by the Apostle? If in Hebrew, (supposing that understood by his audience,) how can the peculiar form in which they occur be accounted for? But if in Greek, the considerations above mentioned in regard to the analogous quotations in the second chapter, will explain their special character, as differing somewhat both from the Septuagint and from the original Hebrew text. Thus, also, we are furnished with another proof of the minute accuracy of the sacred historian, in preserving to us the exact expressions which were at this time made use of by the Apostle.

The same remarks apply to the speeches and other addresses recorded in the fourth and fifth chapters. At chap. v. 8-12, we find the report of a speech delivered by Peter before the ecclesiastical rulers; and there is no reason to suppose that it was spoken in any other tongue than that in which it is still preserved. On the contrary, it bears every mark of having been delivered in the Greek language. Interwoven with this address of the Apostle's, we find (ver. 11) a quotation from Ps. cxviii. 22, given with the same free yet unmistakeable reference to the language of the Septuagint, by which, as we have already seen, St Peter's citations are generally distinguished. In the same chapter, (ver. 24-30,) we find a report of the joint supplication in which the disciples engaged when the two apostles returned to them, and related the events which had taken place. A quotation of considerable length from the second psalm occurs in this prayer, and is taken *verbatim* from the Septuagint. In the



various conversations and addresses contained in the fifth chapter, there is nothing which, by itself, indicates what language was employed. After what has been already proved, however, the strong presumption is in favour of the Greek. To suppose that any other language was now used is a mere assumption, which cannot perhaps be formally refuted, but which is virtually contradicted both by what goes before and what follows. The only fair and natural conclusion is, that, as in the second chapter the sermon of Peter was indisputably delivered in Greek, and as abundant proof will soon be produced to shew that Greek also was employed on those occasions which are referred to in the chapters immediately succeeding those now under consideration, so, unless any special reason can be assigned for adopting the contrary opinion, the various discourses, supplications, and conferences, reported in the third, fourth, and fifth chapters, must also be held to have been carried on in the Greek language.

We next proceed to a consideration of the sixth and seventh chapters ; and, in doing so, pass to a portion of the narrative which testifies very plainly to the common employment of the Greek language in Jerusalem. In chapter vi. 1-6, an account is given us of the strife which arose between the Hellenists and the Hebrews, and of the measure to which the apostles had recourse in order to put an end to this unseemly and hurtful contention. And here, though the discussion will interrupt for a time the direct prosecution of our argument, it appears necessary to consider at some length the meaning of these two terms, *Hellenists* and *Hebrews*. This is a question

which has been much agitated; it cannot be said with very certain or satisfactory results. The prevailing opinion among biblical scholars respecting the parties so designated is, that the Hellenists were those Jews who, on one ground or another, employed the Greek language, while the Hebrews were such as adhered to the ancient vernacular language of their country. I have presented in the notes below a sort of *catena* of opinions on this subject, from Chrysostom downwards, and it will be observed that, however many the shades of difference to be found in the definitions given of the terms in question, the great majority of expositors agree in holding that the *language* which they employed was a marked characteristic of the two parties respectively.\* By most modern

\* Even from the earliest times to which criticism can make any appeal, these two terms seem to have caused difficulty and confusion. The Syriac Peschito version translates Ἑλληνισταί in chap. vi. 1 as "the Greek disciples," while in chap. ix. 29 the same word is rendered "those Jews who were acquainted with Greek." The Latin Vulgate has simply *Græci* in both passages.

*Chrysostom*, in Homily xiv. on the Acts of the Apostles, remarks on the sacred writer's use of the terms Ἑλλ. and Ἑβρ. in Acts vi. 1, "Ἑλληνιστὰς δὲ οἶμαι καλεῖν τοὺς Ἑλληνιστὶ φεγγομένους." Compare Hom. xxi. on chap. ix. 29, and Hom. xxv. on Acts xi. 20.

I may here remark, to shew how little dependence is to be placed on mere patristic authority with respect to such a point, that we find Chrysostom falling into the same obvious error as that which we formerly saw was committed by Eusebius, when he observes of St Paul, in his fourth Homily on the Second Epistle to Timothy, that he was "a poor man, unskilled in the wisdom of those without, *knowing only the Hebrew tongue.*"

An ancient scholiast of uncertain date, and who may possibly have merely borrowed the opinion from Chrysostom, gives a like definition of the term Hellenist to that just quoted, "Ἑλληνιστῶν—τῶν Ἑλληνιστὶ φεγγομένων, καίτοι Ἑβραίων ὄντων τῷ γένει."—*Matthæi's Nov. Test.*, in Act. vi. 1.

The following succinct statement from *Fabricius* (Bib. Græc., iv. 893) will shew the diverse opinions which have been held by the

writers indeed, this is generally referred to as the one great outstanding difference between the Hellenists and Hebrews. If the reader glances at any of the

learned, since the Reformation, on the point in question :—"De Hellenistis, septem sententias eruditorum reperio, e quibus perplacet mihi *prima* Lud. Capelli, Opp. posthum. pag. 294, cui Hellenistæ sunt ethnici. *Secunda*, Est Is. Vossii, cap. ult. de Sibyllinis, atque intelligit Judæos, Ethnicorum Romanorum partes secutos, aut qui in eorum stipendio vixerunt. *Tertia*, Erasmi, qui nomen Hellenistarum factionem etiam innuere existimat, non tantum nationem aut linguam. *Quarta*, Petri de Marca vi. de concordia Sacerdotii et Imperii, c. i., pag. 59, e cujus sententiâ Hellenistæ sunt Judæi dispersionis secundæ, in provinciis Græcorum sive gentilium dispersi. *Quinta*, Jo. Lightfooti, qui Hellenistas fuisse existimavit Judæos, habitantes in gentibus, neque gnaros linguæ Hebraicæ, sed quamvis aliam illius in quâ versarentur gentis linguam solitos loqui. *Sexta*, Hellenistas accipit de Proselytis justitiæ e Græcis. Ita, Joach. Camerarius, Beza, Salmasius, Croius, Pearsonius lectionibus ad Acta Apostol. pag. 52 sq., Matthæus Cotthierius, Guil. Caueus, et Sam. Basnage ad A.C. 35 nr. 7. *Septima*, Denique Hellenistas contendit fuisse Judæo-Græcienses 'Ελληνιστὶ διαλεγόμενους (ita Syrus, Chrysost., Theophylact., Œcumen., et in versione Græcobarbara Maximus Margumius) verbis Græcis, phrasibus uti solitos Hebraicis, et extra Judæam habitantes. Ita, Josephus Scaliger ad Eusebii nr. 1734, Dan. Heinsius in Exerc. ad N. T. et in aliis quæ memoravit scriptis, Drusius, Hugo Grotius, Hammondus, Rich. Simon, Cocceius, præfat. ad Cod. Sanhedrin, Jo. Seldenus, Dionys. Petavius, Constantinus l'Empereur, Barthol. Maierus in Philologia sacra, aliiq̃ue." For a fuller account of some of the opinions here referred to, see *Suicer's* "Thesaurus," sub voce 'Ελληνιστής.

*Diodati* says, "Aio appellatam fuisse Hellenistam gentem illam, quæ a Græcis in Judæam translatis orta est, idque nomen ei ab avitâ Græcorum religione, quam adhuc inter Judæos retinebat, fuisse inditum," p. 59.

*Pfannkuche* speaks of the Hellenists as "only proselytes who were always somewhat despised by the Jews who belonged to the twelve tribes, or Hebrews in the strict sense of the word, and were denominated Hellenists, in reference to their heathen extraction."

*Hug* affirms that "the Hellenists were distinguished by their language, in respect to which they stood opposed to Jews speaking Hebrew or Aramæan. They were men who spoke Greek."

*Wahl*, in his "Clavis," defines 'Ελλ. as "Judæus extra Palestinam degens et linguâ Græcâ utens, sive retinuerit religionem Judaicam, sive amplexus fuerit Christianam." So, *Dr Davidson*, "Introd.," i., p. 43.

*De Wette* describes the Hellenists as "griechische Juden-Christen,

definitions which I have quoted from the more recent critics, or looks into any of the ordinary and popular commentaries on the New Testament, he will see that the leading distinction which they in common indicate as having existed between the two parties, is that the Hellenists employed the Greek, and the Hebrews the Hebrew language.

Now, with much deference to the eminent authorities who have sanctioned it, I cannot regard the prevailing opinion with respect to the distinction between the Hellenists and Hebrews as at all satisfactory. I believe that the difference existing between the two parties had *no* special reference to language. It seems to me to have lain much deeper than a mere diversity of dialect, and to have, in fact, consisted of a DIFFERENCE OF PRINCIPLE. I conceive that the *Ἰουδαῖοι*, native and foreign, were then, and had for a considerable time been, divided into two great classes, here denoted *Ἑλληνισταί* and *Εβραῖοι*, and that these were marked out from each other by very distinct and characteristic tendencies. The *Hellenists*, I believe, were those Jews, whether belonging to Palestine or

jedoch die griechischen Proselyten welche Christen geworden mit begriffen." So, *Winer, R.W.B.*

*Thiersch* declares, ("Versuch," &c., p. 49,) respecting the distinction between the Hebrews and Hellenists, "Es kann jetzt als ausgemacht angesehen werden, dass diese Benennungen, auf einen Unterschied nicht der Herkunft sondern der Sprache hinweisen."

*Alford* says, (in loc.,) "The Hellenists were the Grecian Jews; not only those who were themselves proselytes, nor only those who came of families once proselytised, but all who, on account of origin or habitation, *spoke* Greek as their ordinary language, and used ordinarily the LXX. version." The Hebrews were, he adds, specially "distinguished by *language*, as speaking the Syro-Chaldaic, and using the Hebrew Scriptures." So, with slight modifications, almost all recent writers.



not, who willingly yielded to the influence of Gentile civilisation and habits, and were thus distinguished by their free and liberal spirit ; the *Hebrews*, again, were the rigid adherents to Judaism, who, in spite of the providential agencies which had been long at work, endeavoured to keep up those peculiar and exclusive usages by which the Jews had for so many centuries been preserved distinct from all other nations. Let me now, as briefly as possible, state the reasons which have led me to this conclusion :—

I. We know that, at least from the times of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Jews were divided among themselves into those who readily yielded to the influence of Gentilism, and those who did their utmost to resist it. We see these two parties in frequent and furious collision during the period of which the history is contained in the First and Second Books of Maccabees. Their acceptance of Greek culture and usages, or their adherence to the strictest Judaism, formed the respective badges by which, politically as well as religiously, the two parties were distinguished. Some prided themselves on the purity of their descent, and their abhorrence of all Gentile practices, and these had acquired, or, more properly speaking, had assumed, the title of *Hebrews*, *κατ' ἐξοχήν*, being the stern upholders of the whole law of Moses, and the vehement assertors of peculiarly Israelitish privileges. Others, again, had readily yielded to the encroachments of Gentilism ; and, while many of them were as pure Jews by birth as were the members of the opposite party, had ceased to stand so much on their exclusive rights as the seed of Abraham ; and, being willing largely to conform to the habits of the rest of the world, had come to be denominated *Hellen-*

*ists*, that is, imitators or favourers of the manners of the Greeks. It is evident from Acts ix. 29, ("And he (Saul) spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the *Grecians*—πρὸς τοὺς Ἑλληνιστάς—but they went about to slay him,") that the terms in question were used among the Jews themselves; and very probably, like some other party distinctions, the term *Hellenist*, while meant at first as an epithet of reproach, had, in course of time, lost its opprobrious character, and been willingly accepted by those to whom it was applied.

II. Advancing now to the Christian Church itself, we find the same distinction still existing among its members, as has been already shewn to have had a place among the Jews. The term Ἑλληνισταί, which, implying its correlative Ἑβραῖοι, is applied in the ninth chapter to those still outside of Christianity, is in this sixth chapter given to a party *within* the Church. The two tendencies of opinion which had for long existed among the Jews as a nation, continued strikingly to appear among those of them who were converted to the faith of Christ. There was a large party who, after having received the gospel, nevertheless still clung with the greatest tenacity to the restrictive spirit and the distinctive rites of Judaism. These were the *Hebrews* referred to in this passage. They were undoubtedly for a long time very powerful in the mother-church at Jerusalem. This appears afterwards, among other proofs, from the language addressed to St Paul by St James and others, when they said to him, (chap. xxi. 20, 21,) "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all *zealous of the law*, and they are informed of thee that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to

forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs." But, although the word *all* is here used generally of the believers in Jerusalem, that word, as often, must not be strained to its utmost possible significance. It is certain that almost from the beginning, there was a liberal party in the Church, who did not imagine that the peculiar forms of Judaism were to be preserved under the gospel, or that any restrictions were to be attended to in proclaiming the blessings of Christianity. We find, accordingly, that the accusation presented against Stephen before the Sanhedrim, by the false witnesses suborned for the purpose, is expressed in these words, (chap. vi. 13, 14,) "This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law : for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us." Although these men are styled "false witnesses" in the narrative, and really were so, yet their falsity did not consist in fabricating a story, which had no foundation whatever to rest upon, but in perverting and misrepresenting the language which Stephen had really been accustomed to employ. And it is observable that no such charge as that to which he had to answer is ever brought against any of the apostles, until Paul, carrying out the liberal views which seem to have been first enunciated by Stephen, found himself on this account, not only hated with the greatest intensity by his unbelieving countrymen, but even compelled to differ with some of his most esteemed colleagues in the apostolic office. The leading men in the Church seem all at first to have belonged to the *Hebrew* party. Hence

we find (chap. v. 28) that the indignant language addressed by the high priest, sitting in council, to the apostles, involved no such element of accusation as that urged against Stephen, but was simply as follows : “Did not we straitly command you that ye should not *teach in this name?* And, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to *bring this man’s blood upon us.*” And Peter, speaking in the name of all the rest, clearly shews, by the tenor of his reply, that the truth, so fearlessly proclaimed by Stephen, had not yet dawned upon their minds. “Then Peter,” we are told, (ver. 29–32,) “and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree : Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to ISRAEL, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things ; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him.”\* It seems to me mani-

\* *Dr Alexander* of Princeton, U.S., in his admirable work on the Acts of the Apostles, makes the following remarks on the word *Israel*, as employed by St Peter in the passage quoted above :—“The express mention of Israel as the object of this favour is not intended to restrict it to the Jews ; but either to intimate the priority of the offer made to them, (see above, iii. 26,) or to embrace the spiritual Israel, the entire Church of God’s elect, (see Rom. ix. 6,) or, more probably than either, to assure the contemporary Jews, who had been implicated in the murder of their own Messiah, that even this most aggravated sin was not beyond the reach of the Divine forgiveness, if repented of ; to bestow both which gifts, *i.e.*, repentance as the means, and forgiveness as the end, was the very purpose for which Christ had been exalted as a Prince and a Saviour.” I cannot but think that the excellent writer here illustrates a tendency against which expositors of Scripture must ever carefully guard, that of attaching such a meaning to a passage as they conceive it *should* or *must* have, instead of simply bringing out the natural import of the words. Let the term *Israel* have its fair in-



fest from these words, that St Peter and his brethren in the apostolate, were still possessed with the idea that the redemption purchased by Christ was to be limited to those who observed the institutions of Moses ; that they were very far from sharing any Hellenistic tendencies themselves, however forbearingly they might deal with them in others ; and that they did, in fact, all belong to the party denominated *Hebrews*. Their view was that salvation was to be preached only to the Jews ; and that if its blessings might be enjoyed by others than the seed of Abraham, that could only be through their conformity to the special usages of Judaism. This was a sentiment on which they continued for a considerable time to act, and which it proved indeed very difficult to eradicate from their minds. Accordingly, we learn from the subsequent narrative, that the apostles did not *proprio motu* take any steps for introducing the gospel even among the Samaritans. It was the *Hellenist* Philip who took the lead in seeking to evangelise that people, (chap. viii. 5;) and the twelve at Jerusalem merely followed up what seemed the design of Providence, in the blessing which accompanied his labours. It is plain, in short, that the strict, or so-called *Hebrew* party was, at this time, by far the larger and more influential in the Church ; but it is also plain that there was, from the first, a liberal party, the so-called *Hellenists*, who were already dimly conscious of the world-wide influence to be exerted by Christianity, and were earnestly feeling their way to

terpretation, and it clearly suggests to us that Peter and his fellow-apostles as yet thought the blessings of salvation were only to be enjoyed by Jews and proselytes, that is, only in connexion with the distinctive rites of Judaism.

those enlightened and comprehensive principles, afterwards so zealously and eloquently expounded by the great apostle.

Taking this view of the relation of the two parties to each other, we easily understand the cause of that disturbance of which we read in the chapter now more immediatly under consideration. "The daily ministration," in which the Hellenists complained that their widows were neglected, doubtless had reference to the daily distribution of food. It was in their social repasts, which were at the same time religious meetings, that the benevolence of the early Church was chiefly displayed. And that the neglect here complained of had reference principally to such gatherings, seems plain from the language made use of by the apostles in the second verse. Having assembled the disciples, they said unto them, "It is not reason" (or rather "is not agreeable to us,") that we should leave the word of God and *serve tables*," an expression which it seems possible to understand, in this place, only of waiting upon those who were met together for the purpose of partaking of food.\* But we learn from a subsequent part of the book, how particular the Jews were in having any such intercourse with Gentiles. St Peter declares (chap. x. 28) to those assembled in the house of Cornelius: "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation;" and the context seems to shew that the apostle is specially referring in

\* "*(Ministrare mensis)* i. Cœnis quas ἀγάπας vocabant, quarum nomine Diaconi instituti, ne Apostoli, si ministeriis τῶν ἀγαπῶν danda illis esset opera, à ministerio verbi Dei avocarentur."—*Scaliger, in Critici Sacri*, in loc.

these words to such intercourse as is held by those who partake of the same food.\* Now, if such were the feelings entertained by the Ἰουδαῖοι in general towards the Ἕλληνες, there can be little doubt that some portion of the same spirit would be shewn by the Ἑβραῖοι toward the Ἑλληνισταί. And thus we seem to find an explanation of the fact that the "widows" of the Hellenists (χῆραι perhaps representing their *poor* generally†) were overlooked or passed by in the distribution of food, which took place daily to the poorer members of the Church. The *Hebrews*, in whose hands exclusively the service appears hitherto to have been placed, attended to the needy members of their own party, but neglected those of the other, probably under the influence, in an exaggerated form, of the same feeling to which we have found St Peter giving utterance in the house of Cornelius.‡ And hence the appointment, under apostolic direction, of seven *Hellenists*, who should themselves attend to the wants of the poor in that party with which they were connected. There seems every ground to believe, from the fact that the names of all the so-called deacons are Greek, as well as from the consideration that the officials of the Hebrew party doubtless still continued to exercise their functions, and from the nature of the special emergency which had occurred, that all the

\* "Although the terms immediately preceding this are properly expressive of association or companionship in general, the whole connexion gives them a specific application to domestic intercourse, and more especially to that of the table, or participation in the same food."—*Alexander on the Acts*, vol. i., p. 404.

† "Die Wittwen waren das eigentliche Centrum der Armen der alten Welt."—*J. P. Lange, Das Apostolische Zeitalter*, ii., 72.

‡ Compare Gal. ii. 12.

persons now chosen, and installed in office, belonged to the party of the Hellenists. And thus we find reason to conclude, from the whole circumstances of the case, that the distinction between the two parties consisted not in *language*, but in *principle*, as formerly stated.

III. Let us next consider for a little whether traces of substantially the same two parties among the Jews, both without and within the Church, may not be discovered, under different designations, in other parts of the New Testament. We read, (chap. x. 44, 45,) respecting the events which took place in the house of Cornelius, as follows: "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them who heard the word. And *they of the circumcision* WHO BELIEVED were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." And again we are told, (chap. xi. 2, 3,) that when Peter was come to Jerusalem, "*they that were of the circumcision* contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them." Now, it seems to me plain from these passages, that there was then a party among the Jews, both without and within the Church, who were known as "*they of the circumcision.*" That there was such a party *without* the Church, appears evident from the words employed, (x. 45,) when the historian speaks of those belonging to it *who believed*. This addition would have had no meaning, had there not been some, or many, of the ἐκ περιτομῆς party beyond the pale of Christianity. Dr Alexander, therefore, seems to miss the force of the words, when he says, (*in loc.*) "These believers (who came with Peter) are here more particularly described



as being *of* (*i. e.*, belonging to, or derived from) *the circumcision*, (*i. e.*, the religion of which it was the badge or distinctive rite ; compare the use of *baptism* in i. 22, above.) The whole phrase, therefore, means *converted Jews*, as all the followers of Christ had hitherto been." Had this been all the meaning intended by the historian, it seems not a little strange that he should have expressed it by such a periphrasis as "they of the circumcision *who believed*." And, in fact, Dr Alexander, in commenting on chap. xi. 2, adopts that explanation of the phrase which I believe ought to be attached to it throughout the book. "*They of the circumcision*," he says, "means essentially the same thing as in x. 45, namely, Jewish converts or converted Jews, but with the accessory notion, here suggested by the context, of a *circumcision-party*, or of such as not only had been circumcised, but looked on circumcision as a duty not to be dispensed with." Dean Alford, again, has what appears to me a very unsatisfactory note on this passage. His words are—"Οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς must have come into use later, as designating the circumcised generally ; in this case, *all* those spoken of would belong to the circumcision. Luke uses it in the sense of the *time when he wrote* the account." There seems to me no ground for regarding the historian as here making use of any such prolepsis, if it must not rather be called inaccuracy. "They of the circumcision" were already, I believe, a party who had a standing within as well as without the Church, consisting, indeed, to a great extent, of the same persons as are in the sixth chapter denominated *Hebrews*. And taking this view of the matter, an easy and consistent explanation is found for the phrase

wherever it occurs in the New Testament. We meet with a reference to the persons thus designated in three more passages than those which have been noticed in the Acts of the Apostles. In Gal. ii. 12, we are told of Peter, that “before certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing *them which were of the circumcision.*” Here it is manifest that we cannot understand by those ἐκ περιτομῆς, *converted Jews* generally, but must refer the phrase to the strictly Judaistic party within the Church—the *Hebrews*, in fact, who are mentioned in the Acts, and other parts of the New Testament. This party seems to have arrogated the title of Ἡ περιτομή, as well as of οἱ Ἑβραῖοι, both expressions denoting that *glorying in the flesh* which was their special characteristic—the latter appellation having reference more to their Jewish descent, and the former to the importance which they attached to Judaic observances. Accordingly, we find St Paul denying that they had any right to assume, as peculiarly their own, either of these highly honourable designations. In the third chapter of his Epistle to the Philippians, he says to his converts, among other cautions, (ver. 2, 3,) “Beware of the *concision*, for *WE* are the *circumcision*, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” Here the great Hellenistic apostle refuses to acknowledge the Judaisers in the Church as the Περιτομή, and contemptuously assigns them rather the appellation of Κατατομή. And next, we find him in the same chapter (ver. 5) claiming to be an Ἑβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων, although, or, we may say, *because*, Ἑβραῖοι was another of those names in

which the Judaisers gloried. In like manner, in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul, coming down for a moment to the level of those to whom he referred, asks, (ver. 22,) “Are they *Ἑβραῖοι*? So am I;” thus again depriving them of any exclusive right to appropriate that appellation in which they gloried. It seems pretty plain from all this, that *οἱ Ἑβραῖοι* and *οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς* constituted, in fact, the same party then existing among the Jews, whether without or within the Church. And when we refer to the only other passages in which these terms occur in the New Testament, we find that they are in perfect harmony with this conclusion. Besides the texts already quoted, we meet with the phrase *ἐκ περιτομῆς* only in Col. iv. 11, and Tit. i. 10. In the first of these passages, we find the apostle referring to some “of the circumcision” who, contrary to their usual practice, had cordially laboured with him in the service of Christ; while, in the second passage, he alludes, in his more usual strain, to those “of the circumcision” as specially impeding the progress of the gospel. The only place in which the term *Ἑβραῖοι* occurs in the New Testament besides those passages already noticed, is in the inscription of the Epistle to the Hebrews. And it is plain from the slightest glance at the contents of that epistle, how congruent its character and scope are to the supposition that it was addressed chiefly to those *ἐκ περιτομῆς*—to the straiter sect of the Jews who, although they had embraced Christianity, had continued to cling to peculiar Judaic observances, and were in continual jeopardy of apostatising altogether from Christ, and falling back into the religion of their childhood.

Thus identifying “the Hebrews” generally with

those "of the circumcision," the idea of *language* being the great distinction between the two parties referred to in the chapter before us, falls, of course, at once to the ground. The epistles of St Paul clearly prove to us that those ἐκ περιτομῆς were far from being confined to such as spoke the Hebrew language. They existed everywhere throughout the Church. As was to be expected they were most numerous in Palestine, but had a footing also in the Churches of Corinth, Philippi, Crete, and, more or less, in all the rest. Among the unconverted Jews their spirit was manifested by the accusers of Stephen (chap. vi. 9, seq.,) and by the assailants of Paul (chap. xxi. 28.) And there can be no doubt that, notwithstanding the rigidly Judaistic spirit displayed by the enemies of the gospel on both these occasions, the persons who manifested it employed the *Greek* language. In the former case we are told that the opponents of Stephen were "certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia, and of Asia," and it needs no proof that all these were Greek-speaking Jews. And in the latter case it was the Jews of Asia Minor who, being present in Jerusalem, raised the outcry against Paul; and it is equally certain that these made use of the Greek language. Within the Church, again, when we find the character belonging to those ἐκ περιτομῆς displayed not only at Jerusalem, (Acts xi. 2, xv. 5,) but at Philippi, and in Crete, (Philip. iii. 2; Tit. i. 10, &c.,) we need no more to prove that if, as we have seen reason to believe, the Ἑβραῖοι were substantially the same party as those ἐκ περιτομῆς, then the distinction between the *Hellenists* and the *Hebrews*



of this chapter consisted in a difference of PRINCIPLE and not of language.

IV. Let us now look more particularly at the terms themselves by which the two parties here referred to are designated, and inquire whether by their etymology and general import they favour that view of their signification in this passage which it has been sought to establish. The term 'Ελληνιστῆς occurs only twice in the New Testament,—once here, and again at chapter ix. 29.\* It is derived in the usual way from the verb 'Ελληνίζω, and that again from "Ελλην—a Greek—or, as it means very frequently in the New Testament, a Gentile. We find in numerous passages the words *Jews* and *Greeks* used, in opposition to each other, to denote all mankind, (*e.g.*, in Rom. i. 16, 1 Cor. i. 22, 23,) the former term referring to the seed of Abraham after the flesh, and the latter embracing the rest of the human race. "Ελλην, then, meaning a Greek or Gentile, 'Ελληνίζω will mean generally, "to act as a

\* It will be seen that I agree with those critics who hold that "Ελληνας, and not 'Ελληνιστάς, is the true reading in chap. xi. 20. The diplomatic authority is pretty equally balanced, but contextual evidence leaves little room for hesitation. It seems plain that 'Ιουδαῖοι, (ver. 19,) the generic expression for the whole house of Israel, could never have been contrasted with 'Ελληνισταί, (ver. 20,) who were themselves Jews, but finds its only antithesis in "Ελληνες. It has been said that the Syriac Peschito, one of the most important of the witnesses, translates the expression which occurs in this passage by the same word as in chap. vi. 1, and that, therefore, its testimony in behalf of the reading "Ελληνας is neutralised. But this should not be so readily granted as it has been, (*Alford*, ii., 30.) No doubt, the Syriac word for *Greeks*, ܡܕܢܝܐ, occurs in both passages; but in the first it is accompanied by the adjunct *disciples*, while in the second it stands alone. "The Greek disciples" is the rendering in vi. 1, implying, I think, that the translator regarded the Hellenists as *Gentile proselytes*; whereas in xi. 20 the rendering is simply "the Greeks," suggesting, naturally, not the reading πρὸς τοὺς 'Ελληνιστάς, but πρὸς τοὺς "Ελληνας.

Gentile," ("more Græcorum me gero," ἑθνικῶς ζῆν, as it is expressed in Gal. ii. 14, in opposition to Ἰουδαίειν,) and Ἑλληνιστής, one who adopts Greek customs, who conforms himself to Gentile habits. There is no necessary reference to *language*, either in the mimetic verb from which the noun is derived, or in the noun itself. Instances may indeed be found in which the verb means "to speak Greek," but it is the context only which shews such to be its signification, and its normal meaning (as in the case of the analogous *verba mimetica*, Μηδίζω, Ῥωμαίζω, &c.) is simply "to favour the interests" or "to follow the customs of the Greeks," in whatever way, or to whatever extent, such a tendency may be indicated. We conclude, therefore, that the term *Hellenist*, as applied to a Jew, meant one who did not hedge himself round by the peculiar usages of Judaism, but yielding, less or more, to the spirit of the age in which he lived, was ready in various ways to adopt and observe the opinions and practices of the Gentile world.

The term Ἑβραῖοι, again, as used in opposition to Ἑλληνισταί, has manifestly lost the wide significance it once had in embracing the whole Jewish race, and is restricted to a particular part of it. And the explanation already given of its antithetical expression enables us to reach the special meaning which is now to be assigned to it. If *Hellenists* denoted those Jews who had relaxed in the stringency of their Judaism, *Hebrews* will be those who adhered more rigidly to the forms of their ancient faith. We have already seen how exactly this explanation of the term suits all the passages in which it occurs in the New Testament, and we may now go a little further and observe that such suitable-

ness is not apparent with regard to the meaning usually put upon the word when it is conceived to have a special reference to language. Can it be supposed that when St Paul describes himself (Phil. iii. 5) as "an Hebrew of the Hebrews," or when he exclaims with reference to the boasts of the Judaisers at Corinth, (2 Cor. xi. 22,) "Are they Hebrews? so am I," he makes any allusion to his knowledge or employment of the Hebrew language? \* And, again, it is palpably absurd

\* *Dean Trench*, in his useful little work on the "Synonyms of the New Testament," while adhering to the common view in regard to the meaning of the term Ἑβραῖος, hints at the difficulty which is found in applying it to some of the passages in which the word occurs. He remarks: "According to the usage of this word in the New Testament, the point of view external to the nation, which it once always implied, exists no longer; neither is every member of the chosen family an Ἑβραῖος now, but only those who, whether dwelling in Palestine or elsewhere, have retained the sacred Hebrew tongue as their native language; the true complement and antithesis to Ἑβραῖος being Ἑλληνιστής, a word first occurring in the New Testament, and there employed to designate the Jew who has unlearned his own language, and now speaks Greek, and reads the Scriptures in the Septuagint version.

"The distinction first appears at Acts vi. 1, and is probably intended in the two other passages, *though these are not without difficulty*, where Ἑβραῖος occurs, (2 Cor. xi. 22, and Phil. iii. 5;) as well as in the superscription, on whosoever authority it rests, of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is important to keep in mind, that in language, not in place of habitation, lay the point of difference between the "Hebrew" and the "Hellenist." He was a "Hebrew," wherever domiciled, who retained the use of the language of his fathers. Thus Paul, though settled in Tarsus, a Greek city in Asia Minor, can affirm of himself, that he was a Hebrew and of Hebrew parents, "a Hebrew of the Hebrews," though it is certainly possible that he may mean by these assertions no more than in general to set an emphasis on his Judaism. Doubtless the greater number of Hebrews *were* resident in Palestine; yet still it was not this fact, but their language, which constituted them such."

I have extracted this passage because it suggests very clearly the difficulties which every candid mind must feel to spring from the adoption of the common opinion respecting the *Hellenists* and *Hebrews*. In accordance with the views maintained above, I would take the liberty

to imagine that an epistle written in *Greek* would have been addressed to those whose very name, inscribed on its front, implied, according to the prevalent opinion, that they employed the Hebrew language ; whereas, on the ground maintained in this work, it was perfectly natural that they should be addressed in Greek ; and the contents of the epistle acquire a special significance when regarded as meant, in the first instance, for those who still required to be taught that all that was distinctively Jewish had been virtually abolished by the promulgation of Christianity.

To sum up. There seems to be no reference whatever to *language* in the antithetical terms "Hebrews" and "Hellenists," which occur in this passage. It is a difference of *principle* and *tendency* which is pointed to ; and while it might have been thought *à priori* that the strictly Jewish party would, among other things, be distinguished by their avoidance of the Hellenic language and literature, and their exclusive use of the ancient vernacular tongue, yet facts which are irresistible will not permit us to entertain such an opinion. And we see that it by no means followed that those who were Hellenistic in speech, should also Hellenise in principle or tendency.\* Circumstances, which could not be helped or controlled, had compelled the Jews in of altering and then adopting the learned writer's language as follows : "It is important to keep in mind that in *principle*, not in place of habitation, lay the point of difference between the 'Hebrew' and the 'Hellenist.' . . . Doubtless the greater number of Hebrews *were* resident in Palestine, yet still it was not this fact, but" the principles on which they acted, which proved that they belonged to that long dominant party.

\* Amid much that I humbly conceive mistaken, the possibility, or, rather, certainty of this distinction existing in many cases, is indicated by *Conybeare and Howson*, "Life and Epistles of St Paul," Original Edition, p. 44.



general to become familiar with the Greek language. Political and social causes had long been at work in Palestine which necessitated its employment, even by those who were most opposed to Gentilism. And while, beyond doubt, as the *Ἑβραῖοι*—the strict, pretentious, and sometimes fanatical Jews—were principally found among the natives of Palestine, most of those who understood either ancient Hebrew or Aramaic belonged to that party, yet there were few, if any, among them who did not also understand and employ Greek. In a word, the Hellenists were the liberal, and the Hebrews the bigoted party among the Jews, whether within or without the Church ; the most of those who understood Aramaic belonged to the party of the *Ἑβραῖοι*, though some of the *Ἑλληνισταί*, such as St Paul and the Jewish historian Josephus, could also employ it ; but both parties, Hellenists and Hebrews, were familiarly acquainted with Greek, held such intercourse with each other as is implied in the sixth chapter of the Acts in that language, and generally employed it for all literary purposes, and on all public occasions.

Proceeding now to the seventh chapter, we come upon ground which can hardly be disputed. Even those who are still far from holding the views set forth in this work, have felt themselves almost compelled to admit that the speech of Stephen before the Sanhedrim was delivered in the Greek language.\* The reasons

\* "It seems most probable that he spoke in Greek."—*Alf. in loc.* Even *Canon Wordsworth* admits that the language of this speech "may, perhaps, have been Greek." But he prefers the other supposition, so fruitful of difficulties, that it was Hebrew. See his *Comm. in loc.* *Mr*

for holding this seem to me very obvious and decisive. It may be noticed, (1), that the accusers of Stephen were unquestionably men to the majority of whom the Greek language only was vernacular. They consisted of Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and others, (chap. vi. 9)—foreign Jews accustomed to make use of Greek, and to whom, as a rule, Hebrew was utterly unknown. If, then, these men were present, as many of them would needs be, when Stephen was now arraigned before the Sanhedrim, the speech which he delivered must have been in Greek, else it would have been to them unintelligible. Again, (2), it is a necessary inference from the verse which has been referred to, that Stephen was himself one who was in the habit of employing the Greek language. He doubtless belonged, as we have seen, to the liberal or Hellenistic party in the Church, and was thus brought into collision with those Jews who, though speaking Greek, were identified with the bigoted section of their countrymen, and had on this account so vehemently accused him. It follows that, as he and they had been accustomed to dispute together in Greek, the speech which he now delivered would also be in the Greek language. And again, (3), if we look at the address itself, we find that it bears plain evidence of having been spoken in Greek. It consists in substance of a cento of extracts from different parts of the Septuagint, strung together in a loose, yet masterly manner. And nothing surely could be more improbable than either that Luke adopted the version of the LXX., so often in this chapter differing from the

*Grinfield* thinks that "there are not less than twenty-eight distinct quotations" from the LXX. in this address of Stephen.—*Apology*, &c., p. 32.

Hebrew,\* while Stephen really made his quotations from the original Scriptures ; or that Stephen himself, in quoting the Hebrew, altered it as we find in the Greek version of his words. One or other of these improbabilities must be maintained by all who hold that Hebrew was used by the protomartyr on this occasion ; and there are probably few readers who will be inclined to adopt either of the alternatives, in preference to the natural conclusion, reached on other grounds, that Stephen now made use of the Greek language.

Here then, again, we have a decisive case. We find that a long and important speech, addressed to the most national and distinctive of Jewish courts, was delivered in *Greek*. There can be no doubt that it was an *open* assembly in which Stephen now pled—that vast multitudes of the common people were present—that he addressed himself to them *all* (ver. 2, *ἄνδρες, ἀδελφοὶ, καὶ πατέρες*)—that all perfectly understood him (ver. 54)—and that, therefore, the inhabitants of Jerusalem in general were then thoroughly familiar with the Greek language.

The eighth chapter contains (ver. 1-25) an account of the visit of the Hellenist Philip to a city of Samaria, of his success in preaching the gospel in that place, of the conduct of Simon Magus, with the discourse of Peter regarding it, and of the preaching of the truth in other villages of the Samaritans. For

\* See *e.g.*, ver. 14, in which we find “*ἐβδομηκονταπέντε*,” *seventy-five*, derived from the version of the LXX. in Gen. xlv. 27; Exod. i. 5; Deut. x. 22; whereas in all these passages the Hebrew has *שבעים*, *seventy*. Again, we find (ver. 44) the Septuagint rendering of Num. xvi. 18, &c., “*ἡ σκηνὴ τοῦ μαρτυρίου*,” the tabernacle of *witness*, whereas the Hebrew reads *אהל מועד*, the tabernacle of *congregation*.

reasons formerly assigned, I believe it must be held that the inhabitants of Samaria then generally employed Greek, so that on this ground, as well as from the fact that Philip was undoubtedly accustomed to its use, we are led to conclude that the addresses here spoken of were delivered in that language.

The ninth and tenth chapters principally refer to transactions which took place at Damascus, Joppa, and Cæsarea, and therefore have no direct bearing on our argument. After what has been already proved, most readers will probably admit that the addresses of various kinds contained in these chapters were originally spoken in the language in which we still possess them ; and thus the continuity still remains unbroken, which we have traced from the beginning of the book, in regard to the employment of the Greek language.

In the eleventh chapter we are again introduced to the Church at Jerusalem. A report of what had happened at Cæsarea having been carried to Jerusalem, caused no small excitement among the brethren ; and when Peter himself came up to explain the matter, he found that "they of the circumcision" were not a little offended with the liberty he had used in having such intimate relations with uncircumcised Gentiles. Peter therefore "rehearsed the matter from the beginning," explaining to them in words almost identical with those employed before, (chap. x. 11-16,) in narrating the same events, how it came to pass that he had acted in the way he had done. That the apostle now spoke in Greek, according to his usual practice, seems implied in the fact stated, (ver. 12,) that the six brethren who had accompanied him from Joppa to Cæsarea were present on this occasion, and were apparently



referred to as witnesses of the events which he related, so far as they were acquainted with them. The speech of the apostle therefore must have been delivered in a language which they understood ; and if it be admitted, as I suppose it will, that Greek was then the prevalent language in Joppa,\* as in Cæsarea, and the other sea-coast towns of Palestine, it follows that the address of Peter at this time was, as usual, in the Greek language.

In the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters, there is nothing which bears directly on the point as to the prevailing language in Palestine. It is beyond question that the oration of Herod Agrippa at Cæsarea, (chap. xii. 21,) delivered in the hearing of the people of that city, and of deputies from Tyre and Sidon, was in Greek. With respect to the long discourse of St Paul in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, (chap. xiii. 14-41,) it is only, I believe, the influence of a strong prejudice which can prevent any one from seeing that it was delivered in the Greek language. The speech itself bears evidence to that effect. It is addressed to both Jews and Gentiles. This is plain from the whole tenor of the address, and is clearly indicated in its opening words,—“Men of Israel,” (*Ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλῖται*, Jews by birth,) and “Ye that fear God,” (*Οἱ φοβούμενοι*

\* There is very little notice taken of this city in Jewish history. It does not appear in Scripture from the mention of it in the Book of Jonah till it is referred to in the Acts of the Apostles. Josephus notices it in two passages, (Wars, ii., 18, 10, iii., 9, 2, seq. ; ) and in the Second Book of Maccabees (chap. xii. 3-7) we find a statement to the effect, that the inhabitants having perfidiously thrown two hundred Jews into the sea, Judas Maccabæus, to avenge his countrymen, surprised the city by night, and set the ships on fire. This incident is enough to prove that the Gentile element predominated largely in the city, and that Greek consequently was the prevailing language.

τὸν Θεόν, the pious Gentiles who were present.) It abounds in references to the Septuagint, and follows its readings even where these are entirely different from the Hebrew. The preservation in the apostle's speech of such a remarkable departure from the original text, as is found in the passage cited from the LXX. at verse 41,\* can only be accounted for on the ground that he actually adopted this rendering, and so was speaking at the time in the Greek language. The same opinion must be held with respect to the speech recorded in the following chapter, (xiv. 14-17,) as addressed to the multitude in Lystra of Lycaonia. The circumstances attending the delivery of this speech were formerly noticed,† and there can be no doubt whatever that, like those preceding it, it was spoken in the Greek language.

Once more, in the fifteenth chapter we are carried by the course of the history to Jerusalem. And here, again, we find the clearest and most conclusive evidence in favour of our proposition. The speeches of St Peter and St James before the assembly which had convened to deliberate on the point then threatening to break the peace of the Church, as well as the letter by which the mind of the council was conveyed to the parties interested, may all be shewn by the most irrefragable proof to have been spoken and written in the form in which we still possess them,—the Greek language. This follows at once, with respect to the speeches, from the consideration that deputies, sent up with Paul and Barnabas by the Church at Antioch to have the matter

\* The passage quoted is from Hab. i. 5, where the Hebrew is בְּנֵי־אֱדֻמִּים, "among the heathen," while the Septuagint reads Καταφρονῆται, "ye despisers,"

† See above, chap. i., pp. 16-18.

in dispute discussed and settled, (ver. 2,) were present during the debates which now took place regarding it. As was formerly shewn,\* there can be no question that in Antioch, the capital of the Greek kingdom of Syria, the Greek language was habitually employed ; and it would have been truly strange if the deputies referred to, on coming up to Jerusalem, and submitting the controverted point to the judgment of the Church in that city, had found themselves precluded, by the use of Hebrew in the assembly, from understanding one word of what was said. But it is manifest that no such course was followed. We naturally suppose that the various speakers, among whom Peter, Barnabas, and Paul are expressly mentioned, made use of the same language that we have always hitherto seen them employing, and not the Hebrew, the use of which would have necessitated the employment of an interpreter to some of the audience, a functionary of whom not the least trace is to be found in the narrative. And the speech of James, who seems to have spoken as president, contains positive evidence that Greek *was* the language employed. It includes a very remarkable citation from the Book of Amos, differing widely towards the close from the Hebrew original ; but agreeing as nearly with the Septuagint, as is usually the case with those *memoriter* quotations which occur so frequently in the New Testament. Now, it is impossible to believe that the inspired historian would have attributed the words of the LXX. to the apostle on this occasion had not St James actually employed them, since, in fact, the weight of the argument greatly depends on that part of the citation which differs entirely from the Hebrew text ;

\* See above, chap. ii., p. 60.

and it is therefore evident that the speech must have been delivered in the Greek language.\*

Again, that the epistle agreed upon by the assembly to be sent to "the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia," (ver. 23,) was written in Greek, is too plain to require any remark. No one can possibly deny it who considers either its form, which is in the regular epistolary style of the Greeks, or the *persons* to whom it was addressed, who are expressly described as Gentiles. The formula of salutation with which it opens (*Χαίρετε*) is the same with that contained in the letter of Claudius Lysias to Felix, (chap. xxiii. 26,) and only occurs again in the New Testament in the Epistle of James, (ver. 1;) and like both these documents,† it was undoubtedly composed in the Greek language.

On looking into the various critical commentaries on this chapter, I find there is an almost unanimous agreement with the views which have just been expressed as to the language employed in the trans-

\* The attempts made to deny this are but few and feeble. *Alford* expresses his belief that James "*spoke in Greek*;" and *Alexander* remarks: "The quotation is made from the Septuagint version, even where it varies most from the original, not because the latter would not answer the apostle's purpose, but because he *no doubt spoke in Greek*, and therefore used the current version without regard to its inaccuracies, as they did not interfere with the design of his quotation."—*Comm. on Acts*, in loc.

† It is pretty commonly asserted that the letter of Claudius Lysias, here referred to, was written in *Latin*. (See *Conyb. and Howson*, i., 3.) But this is one of those baseless statements in which, without any warrant from the narrative, commentators on Scripture have been too much in the habit of indulging. It is *possible* that Latin may have been used on this occasion, but to say that "there is hardly any doubt" that such was the case, is going far beyond the warrant of the facts. *Dr Alexander* well remarks, (in loc.,) "As Greek was in such extensive use, there is no need of supposing that this letter is translated from the Latin."



actions of the council at Jerusalem. Expositors are here led, in spite of all preconceived notions, to fall in with that proposition which it is the object of this work to establish. They admit that Greek was now the language used by 'Εβραῖοι no less than 'Ελληνισταί, (adopting, for the moment, the meaning which *they* put upon these terms,) and yet they imagine that the great distinction between the two parties consisted in this, that the former used the Hebrew, and the latter the Greek language. The vast majority of the audience on this occasion consisted of the natives of Jerusalem—the τὸ πλῆθος mentioned in ver. 12, who seem, also, in a somewhat irregular way, to have taken part in the discussion, (ver. 7, compared with ver. 12,) and who were all to be ranked among the 'Εβραῖοι as that word is usually explained. Yet the language employed throughout was *Greek*. How, then, can the distinction stand which discriminates between the Hellenists and Hebrews of chapter vi. 1, specially on the ground of the dialect which the two parties severally used? Is it not plain from this passage, even though there were no other, that no such distinction existed between them? And after the proof here furnished, is it possible to deny any longer the truth of our proposition, that Greek was then the language regularly employed in Palestine, both for all literary purposes, and on all ordinary public occasions?

After the events narrated in the fifteenth chapter, we are again led away by the course of the narrative from Jerusalem, and follow the footsteps of St Paul, as he journeys through Asia Minor and Greece, confirming the churches which he had formerly planted, and introducing the gospel into new regions which

had not as yet listened to the accents of salvation. It needs no word to prove that, in all these peregrinations, the tongue of Greece was still the instrument which the apostle employed in addressing to men the words of eternal life. Throughout the travels recorded in the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth chapters, in which there meet us such names as Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and Miletus, not the most sceptical can doubt that it was the Greek language which was continually employed. It is not till we reach the twenty-first chapter that we again find the apostle in Palestine, and at Jerusalem. And here, as before, I believe the plainest proof is presented that Greek was the language commonly employed in public by the inhabitants of that city ; although I readily admit it is equally plain that occasions *might* arise on which those able to do so would deem it advisable to address them in Aramaic, the existing representative of the ancient vernacular language of the country.

St Paul, having long been distinguished for the liberal spirit with which he treated the Gentiles, and the zeal with which he opposed the narrow bigotry of the Judaistic party in the Church, had become peculiarly obnoxious to the stern upholders of the law of Moses, whether within or without the pale of Christianity. On arriving at Jerusalem, therefore, he found that, though most cordially received by James and the other leading men in the Church, they were somewhat suspicious of the effect which his arrival would have upon the multitude of Jewish zealots, who had yielded to the power of the gospel, but who still clung, with the most pertinacious obstinacy, to the ordinances of

the law. It was accordingly proposed to him that he should publicly engage in one of those Judaic observances, which were in themselves indifferent, but to which the narrow-minded party in the Church attached much importance, and by the performance of which it was hoped that they would become more favourably affected towards the apostle. St Paul appreciated the motives which had led the leaders of the Church in Jerusalem to give him this advice. He had no misgiving that St James and the others associated with him in the government of the Church did not themselves concur, in substance, with the views which he had been accustomed to express. But he perceived the difficulty of their position, as having to deal with those who were as yet totally incapable of understanding the free and catholic spirit of the gospel. With that largeness of mind, therefore, and that tender regard for the prejudices and preferences of others, which ever led him, when no point of principle was involved, to "become all things to all men," St Paul agreed to their proposal, and went through the service which had been suggested.

But the result was different from what was expected. It happened that some Jews from Asia, who had doubtless been among his former opponents at Ephesus, (chap. xx. 19,) were then in Jerusalem, and seeing him in the temple, seized the opportunity of exciting the minds of the people at large against him. Laying hold of him where he stood, and evidently determined, in the most summary manner, to gratify the hatred which they bore him, they cried out, we are told, (ver. 28,) "Men of Israel, help! This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people and the law, and this

place ; and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.” Now, in what *language*, I would ask, was this exclamation uttered ? The answer is obvious, that it was in GREEK. For, from whom did the words proceed ? From men of Asia—inhabitants of Ephesus or the neighbourhood\*—persons to whom the Greek only was vernacular, and of whose knowledge of Hebrew, ancient or modern, not a tittle of evidence can be produced. It is easy, no doubt, to *assume* that these foreign, Asiatic Jews did understand and employ Aramaic. But until some proof is advanced, such an assertion deserves no consideration. And I venture to maintain that no proof *can* be produced that the inhabitants of the district of Ephesus then made use of any other language than Greek. In Greek, therefore, I hold their appeal was now made to the Jewish multitude in Jerusalem. And did it meet with any response, or was there difficulty in understanding it ? The answer is found in these words, (ver. 30,) “And all the city was moved, and the people ran together ; and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple, and forthwith the doors were shut.” We thus learn that the people of Jerusalem were at once roused by the outcry raised by these Jews of Asia in Greek ; and as it is impossible even for those fondest of the hypothesis on other occasions to imagine that an interpreter was employed at this time, it follows, beyond all question, that the common people of the city—the very rabble, (ὁ ὄχλος, ver. 27,) were then perfectly familiar with the Greek language.

It is surely evident, also, that the Roman captain spoke to the multitude in Greek, and was answered by

\* See *Alford* and *Alexander*, in loc.



them in the same language. We read (ver. 33, 34) that "the chief captain came near, and took Paul, [from the crowd,] and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and *demand*ed ["not of Paul himself, but of the people round him," *Alexander* in loc.] who he was, and what he had done. And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude; and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle." The idea of an interpreter being employed between the Roman officer and the multitude is plainly inadmissible. He and they manifestly held direct intercourse with each other. And that being so, what was the language which formed the common medium of communication? Was it Latin, or was it Hebrew, or was it Greek? No one can hesitate for a moment as to the reply to be given; and thus again we find evidence of the thorough acquaintance with Greek which was then possessed by the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Passing over, in the meantime, the twenty-second chapter,\* in which we are informed, for the first and only time, that any other language than Greek was employed by St Paul in his public addresses, we proceed to the twenty-third chapter, which contains an account of the apostle's apologetic speech before the Sanhedrim. In what language did he now speak? We have not to look far in order to find an answer to this question. It is implied in the last verse of the preceding chapter. That verse contains the reason

\* The objections based on some expressions in the latter part of chap. xxi., and on the fact that the speech contained in chap. xxii. was delivered in the Hebrew dialect, will be found considered in their proper place in chap. viii.

why the Roman commander had now ordered the ecclesiastical assembly of the Jews to be convened. Not knowing what to make of the case, and yet desiring to understand it, we read (chap. xxii. 30) that, "On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests, and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them." The Roman officer had not, of course, understood the former speech of the apostle, which for special reasons had been delivered in Aramaic. But he was now present for the express purpose of hearing the explanation which Paul had to offer, and judging of the causes of offence which the Jews had against him. It is obvious, therefore, that the apostle's speech, so rudely interrupted, was in the Greek language; and it is also evident, from the way in which, without any remark, the historian reports it, that Greek was the ordinary tongue employed on such occasions, while Hebrew was used only in some particular circumstances which seemed to call for its employment.

In the twenty-fourth chapter, we find that Paul has been brought down from Jerusalem to Cæsarea, where he is put on his defence before Felix the Roman governor, and his enemies conduct the case against him by means of a public advocate named Tertullus. It has been pretty generally imagined by recent commentators that the language employed by this speaker was Latin. The reasons assigned for this opinion are noticed below,\* and appear to me unsatisfactory. It does not

\* One of these reasons is, that *Tertullus* is a Latin name; but as it is certain that both Greeks and Jews were then in the habit of adopting Roman names, this proves nothing. Another reason is that noticed by Dean Milman, (Bampton Lectures, p. 185,) to the effect that the style

seem at all likely that, unless under the pressure of necessity, Ananias and his colleagues, who, as we learn from the first verse of the chapter, were then present, would have been willing that their advocate should speak in Latin—a language which we have no reason to believe that they understood. And as it cannot be questioned that Paul's address (ver. 10–21) was delivered in Greek, and so as to be perfectly understood by his accusers, the natural conclusion is that the same language was employed throughout the whole proceedings; so that we find in this chapter another proof how familiar Greek then was to the inhabitants of Palestine, and perceive how even the ecclesiastical authorities, who might have been supposed the most determined upholders of all that was distinctively national, were accustomed, as a matter of course, to have causes in which they were interested conducted in the Greek language.

In the twenty-fifth chapter, (ver. 7,) we read that the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem again urged many vehement charges against Paul, and that Paul, (ver. 8,) as was his wont, pled his own cause before the

of the address of Tertullus is peculiarly *Latinistic*, but this is a fact which may be more than questioned. A third reason is that adverted to by *Conybe and Howson*, vol. i., 3, that "Latin was used (in Palestine) in the courts of law." This statement is based on a passage of Valerius Maximus, which, however, seems to tell in the very opposite direction. That writer no doubt says, that the "*magistratus prisci*" were in the habit of employing Latin even when addressing Greeks; but the very expression thus used implies that the custom had *ceased*, a fact afterwards clearly brought out by the historian himself in a passage formerly quoted in this work, (see chap. ii., p. 29.) Besides, in a passage of Dio Cassius, also quoted above, it is expressly stated that, under Tiberius, pleadings were conducted, even at Rome, in the Greek language. And, as has been well remarked, if that were allowed in the capital, we can hardly suppose that a stricter rule was followed in the provinces.

governor. Then follows (ver. 9) an account of a proposal made to the apostle by Festus at the instance of the Jews, that he should go up to be tried at Jerusalem ; but Paul, perceiving the craft which was involved in this proposal, refuses to accept of it ; and, apparently despairing of having justice done him by Festus, ends his brief reply (ver. 10, 11) by making his appeal to the emperor in the usual form, and is accordingly reserved unto the hearing of Augustus. All these proceedings were evidently carried on in the Greek language. The same was obviously the case with the long apologetic discourse of the apostle before Agrippa, of which a full report is preserved in the twenty-sixth chapter. And it may be remarked generally with respect to this part of the Acts, (chaps. xxii.-xxvi.) that, of the five apologies of St Paul which it contains, two were before Jews with Gentiles present—two before Gentiles with Jews present—and this last one was “before a man who might be said to represent, in his own person, both religions and both governments—a Jew by education and profession, the official guardian of the temple and defender of the faith, but at the same time a crowned vassal of the Roman empire, bound to it not only by political necessity, but by personal interest and predilection.”\* Of all these, with the exception of the first—an exception specially marked by the historian—there is evidence both of an internal and external kind to shew that they were delivered in the Greek language.

The twenty-seventh chapter contains an account of the voyage of Paul in a ship of Alexandria towards Italy. The various short speeches of the apostle, pre-

\* *Alexander* on the Acts, ii., p. 409.



served in this chapter (ver. 10, 21-26, 31, 33-34) were all, of necessity, expressed in the Greek language. And the same language continues to be used in the following chapter which concludes the book. It has been argued by some that we have a proof of the supernatural knowledge of languages possessed by the apostles, in the fact that the inhabitants of the island on which the ship carrying Paul was now wrecked are styled "barbarians," yet were understood by him or Luke (ver. 4) in their whisperings with one another.\* Those who reason thus suppose that the natives of the island employed *only* some vernacular tongue, and are styled barbarians on account of their utter ignorance of Greek. But this is a hasty conclusion. The epithet in question seems to have been given them not on account of their language, but their *descent*. They were a Phœnician, and not a Greek or Roman colony. No doubt some Punic form of speech was current among them, as the Lycaonian was at Lystra, and the Hebrew in Jerusalem. But the opinion that they did not also employ Greek seems inconsistent with the fact that vessels from Greek-speaking countries were in the habit of touching at, or wintering in, the isle, (ver. 10;) and also with the fact that there was a Roman settlement near the spot where Paul was wrecked, and consequently some knowledge of the Greek literature and language. The Publius who re-

\* Wordsworth's New Testament, in loc. This able scholar, misled by the opinion he has adopted respecting the gift of tongues, finds in this passage "another silent evidence of power, in the apostles and evangelists, to understand and speak languages which they had not learnt, and were not supposed to know, just as they understood what was said in the Lycaonian dialect, and spoke it to the people at Lystra." See above, Chap. I., pp. 16-18; and Chap. III., pp. 68-74.

ceived Paul so courteously (ver. 7) was probably the governor of the island under the Prætor of Sicily.\* And it appears from two inscriptions which have been discovered in Malta, the one in Latin, and the other in *Greek*, that there is a reference in the word *πρώτος*, employed by St Luke, to the official title which he bore, *Πρώτος Μελιταίων*. All this shews that the inhabitants could not have been ignorant of the Greek language.

The apostle at length arrived in Rome; and we have an account, in the concluding portion of the chapter, (ver. 17–28,) of several interviews which he had with his countrymen in that city. It needs no argument to prove that the language employed on these occasions was Greek. The Epistle to the Romans furnishes sufficient evidence on that point; and we cannot doubt that, as the apostle had formerly written to them, so now he would converse with them, in the Greek language.

We have thus gone through the whole book of the Acts, with a view to ascertain what evidence it bears respecting the question under consideration. And it has uttered no uncertain sound. From beginning to end we have found demonstrative proof of the constant and familiar use then made of the Greek language by the Jews of Palestine, as well as their brethren in other countries. There are four occasions especially to which I would direct the reader's attention, as absolutely decisive of the question at issue. The first is the sermon of Peter on the day of Pentecost—the second, the address of Stephen before the

\* *Cicero*, in *Verrem*, ii., 4, 18. See the commentators on the passage.

Sanhedrim—the third, the speeches delivered by the various speakers in the council at Jerusalem—and the fourth, the outcry raised by the Jews of Asia against St Paul when they met with him in the temple. Let the arguments brought forward to shew that on all these occasions GREEK was the language used be either refuted, or let the conclusion to be derived from that fact be admitted. That conclusion, I humbly think, is not over-stated when it is expressed in the terms of the proposition contended for in this work—that “Greek was widely diffused, well understood, and commonly employed for all public purposes in Palestine, in the times of Christ and His Apostles.”

## CHAPTER VI.

### PROOF FROM THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS OF THE PREVALENCE OF GREEK IN PALESTINE IN THE TIMES OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.

MORE controversies have perhaps been waged respecting the Epistle to the Hebrews than any other book of the New Testament. All admit that it is a noble composition. In a mere literary and artistic point of view, it takes the very highest place among the books of Scripture. In no other is the language so copious and flowing, or the march of the argument so stately and imposing. The Epistle to the Romans may, indeed, vie with it in point of doctrinal importance, and may not be inferior in regard to the skill with which the reasoning is articulated, and the various portions of the argument made to converge on one grand conclusion. But in manner and style, the Epistle to the Hebrews is peculiar. The sonorous character of its diction, the rhythmical balancing of its clauses, the regular construction of its sentences, and the frequent and elaborate illustrations which it contains, serve to mark it out especially from the acknowledged epistles of Paul, and distinguish it, less



or more strikingly, from all the other books of the New Testament.

It follows at once from the fact that this very peculiar composition is *anonymous*, that the question of its authorship must furnish a problem of no easy solution to the biblical student. Had its characteristics been those of the generally-received epistles of Paul, there might have been little difficulty in acquiescing in the conclusion which associates it with his name. But, as is at once evident, the differences are many and great. No reader of the New Testament can pass from a perusal of the Epistle to the Romans to the Epistle to the Hebrews, without feeling as if he had entered an entirely new realm of thought, and were brought in contact with a mind of quite a different order and cultivation. Accordingly, from the days of Origen downwards, all critical students of God's Word have been greatly perplexed by this question of authorship. On the one hand, the transcendent excellence of the epistle seems of itself to suggest its apostolic origin. No one who compares it with any of the sub-apostolic writings can fail to be struck with its immense superiority. The jejune character of even the best remains of the apostolic fathers, the utter want of original or seminal thoughts which appears in them, and the not unfrequently silly or superstitious remarks in which they indulge—all form a very marked contrast to this epistle, and all seem necessarily to suggest its divine authority and inspiration. But then, on the other hand, to what one of the apostles or their associates is it to be ascribed? That is the question which, above all others, agitates, from age to age, the minds of biblical scholars in

connexion with this epistle, and which continues to receive, from different inquirers, the most varied and contradictory answers.

Other questions, moreover, remain behind. There is not, indeed, a single point connected with the epistle that has not been made the subject of controversy. Whether it *be* an epistle or a treatise—whether its original language was Hebrew or Greek—whether, if St Paul was not its sole author, he had any part in its composition—whether, if the Pauline origin must be altogether set aside, the work is to be ascribed to Luke, or Barnabas, or Apollos—and whether it was to the inhabitants of Palestine that it was primarily addressed, or what other community of Christians is to be fixed upon as its original recipients, are all points which have been keenly discussed, and which still divide, to a considerable extent, the opinion of the learned world.

Under the influence of the many important questions thus suggested, the epistle has been subjected to the most elaborate and searching criticism. A large library might be formed of the literature bearing upon this subject. There is not a hint or allusion contained in the epistle, not a phrase or idiom employed, but has been seized upon by industrious and keen-eyed critics, and made to tell favourably upon their own hypotheses, or unfavourably upon those of their opponents. Thus, if it cannot be said that the oft-repeated study of this epistle, and of the various notices respecting it which are to be found in ancient writers, has yet led to a positive settlement of all the questions connected with it, it may certainly be said, that we possess a far more intimate acquaintance with every point, internal and

external, belonging to this portion of Scripture, than we would, or could have done, but for the many and serious difficulties surrounding it.

It is only to the last of the inquiries referred to above that we are here called to direct special attention. The question concerning the *readers* for whose benefit especially the work was written, has manifestly a very important bearing on the controversy respecting the language then prevalent in Palestine. And to contribute to the settlement of that question is the ultimate object contemplated in this chapter. It seems to be necessary, however, before proceeding to the examination of this point, to say a few words in regard to the other questions which have been mentioned, since the determination of one has some influence on the conclusion we are likely to form concerning another.

That the writing is an *epistle*, and not a dissertation or treatise, as some have maintained from the want of the usual introductory formula, I believe, with almost all recent critics, to be too plain to require any lengthened argumentation. There are numerous personal appeals contained in it ; the conclusion is in the regular epistolary style of salutation and benediction ; in short, the notion that it is not an epistle, but a homily or general discourse, is just one of those fanciful hypotheses, which have too frequently found their way into biblical science, but which scarcely deserve or call for any elaborate refutation.

As to the *language* in which the epistle was originally written, many considerations tend to prove that it was Greek. The testimony of antiquity, indeed, rather points to a different conclusion. Clement of Alexan-

dria, the very first writer who refers expressly to the authorship of the epistle, declares that it "was written to the Hebrews, in the Hebrew language." Eusebius, who has preserved to us this statement of Clement, also gives it as his own opinion, that the epistle was addressed "to the Hebrews in their native tongue;" though, as in the analogous case of St Matthew's Gospel, he afterwards falls into inconsistency, and reasons as if he believed the original language to have been Greek. Jerome, in like manner, affirms that Hebrew was the original language of our epistle. Referring in one part of his works (*Catal. Script. Eccl.*, chap. v., Paulus) to the various opinions entertained respecting its authorship, he seems, upon the whole, to ascribe it to St Paul, and then expressly declares, "Scripserat autem ut Hebræus, Hebræis, Hebraice." The same statement is made by Theodoret, Theophylact, and others of the Fathers, and has been adopted by some learned writers in modern times. But the great majority of biblical scholars at the present day agree in believing, on the ground of internal evidence furnished by the epistle, that the ancients were in error on this point, and that the original form of the writing was just that in which we still possess it.

The next question which occurs is that which regards the *authorship* of the epistle. It is with much hesitation that I here touch upon this famous problem, as, however inadequately discussed, it must, I am afraid, if referred to at all, keep us too long from the subject which more immediately requires our attention. But since the two questions respecting the *authorship* and the *destination* of the epistle seem at some points to be vitally connected together, I shall trust to the



reader's indulgence while dwelling somewhat longer on the former point than is, perhaps, altogether proper in a work professing to deal only with the Gospels.

According to some, *internal* evidence is all that we have to guide us to a conclusion respecting the authorship of this epistle. The ancients, with all their statements, hypotheses, and conjectures, furnish us with no assistance. We may, if we choose, hear what they have to say on the subject ; but, after listening to the confused sounds in which they address us, we shall feel that we have got no hint which can be of the slightest value in settling the controversy. All that they can teach us is simply that they know nothing of the matter. And all the advantage which we can derive from looking into their remaining works in quest of information on this subject, is merely to learn that they leave us entirely to our own discretion, and that we are at perfect liberty, if our judgment should so incline us, to ascribe the epistle to one whose name never occurred to them as its possible author.

Thus, Dean Alford (to whose discussion of this question, as the most recent, and one of the most able and impartial, I shall especially refer in the following remarks) observes with regard to the *external* evidence, "It simply leaves us, unfettered by any overpowering judgment of antiquity, to examine the epistle for ourselves, and form our own opinion from its contents," (Greek Testament, vol. iv. part I, Proleg., p. 12.) Again, "What we require is this : that we of this age should be allowed to do just that which the ἀρχαῖοι ἄνδρες did in their age, examine the epistle simply and freely for and by itself, and form our conclusions accordingly, as to its author, readers, and date ; having respect, indeed,

to ancient tradition, where we can find it, but not, where it is so broken and inconsistent with itself, bound by any one of its assertions, or limited in our conclusions by its extent," (Ibid., p. 40.) Once more: "In freely proposing to ourselves the inquiry, Who wrote the epistle? as to be answered entirely from the epistle itself, we are not setting aside, but are strictly following, the earliest and weightiest historical testimonies respecting it, and the references to be deduced from them. And if any name seems to satisfy the requirements of the epistle itself, those who in modern times suggested that name, and those who see reason to adopt it, are not to be held up to derision, as has been done by Mr Forster, merely because that name was not suggested by any among the ancients. The question is as open now as it was in the second century. They had no reliable tradition; we have none. If an author is to be found, *αὐτὸ δέλεται*," (Ibid., pp. 49, 50.)

Now, without professing to attach very great importance to the mere *dicta* of the early Fathers on any point, historical or theological, I cannot but think that Alford here estimates somewhat lightly the statements they have left us with respect to the question under consideration. It is, I hold, a very sound rule, in dealing with the opinions or assertions of early ecclesiastical writers, to follow them *as far* as indubitable facts will possibly permit us. And very often, in acting on this principle, we shall find reason to conclude, that even their errors are not *all* errors, but that there is an ingredient of truth in the mass of erroneous statements which they make.\* The ore may

\* See this point again touched upon in Part ii., chap. iii.

often be of a very impure and inferior character, but still it is *golden* ore, and for the sake even of the few grains of precious metal which it contains, is not to be at once and contemptuously thrown away.

Thus I believe the case stands with reference to the external evidence bearing upon the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews. There is a certain value to be attached to the many statements which have come down to us from antiquity in favour of its Pauline origin, although these statements are often confused and contradictory. Nothing certain, I believe, can be founded on the celebrated passage of the New Testament itself, (2 Peter iii. 15, 16,) in which allusion is made to the epistles of Paul. We must pass beyond the confines of inspired Scripture before we find anything which can be shewn to bear clearly and decidedly, either on the authority or authorship of the epistle.

But the very first step out of the canon of Scripture introduces us to an author who makes the most copious use of the work under consideration. Clement of Rome, whose Epistle to the Corinthians was probably written before the close of the first century, has quoted very largely from the Epistle to the Hebrews. His own writing, indeed, seems, in many passages, just an echo of our epistle. He appears to have ascribed to it the authority of inspiration, although, of course, we do not find him referring to it in those technical terms which afterwards came to denote canonicity. He is silent respecting the authorship; and, if himself acquainted with the name of the author, must for some reason or other, have abstained from mentioning it,\* since we

\* There seems to be some force in the remark of *Dr Wordsworth*, (Greek Test., Proleg. to Hebrews,) "The author of the Epistle to the

find uncertainty prevailing on that point in the western Church down to about the middle of the fourth century. At that date the practice begins among Latin writers of quoting the epistle as St Paul's; and, in spite of lingering doubts, the habit of ascribing it to him is more and more established.

Long before this date, the tradition which assigned the epistle to Paul had been acknowledged in the eastern Church as embodying a certain amount of truth. Pantænus, head of the catechetical school at Alexandria, in the middle of the second century, ascribed the epistle to St Paul, (*Euseb.*, Hist. Eccl., vi. 14.\*) This testimony, with some modifications which are important, as pointing, I believe, to the right conclusion on this perplexing subject, is repeated by Clement himself. His view is (*Euseb.*, ut sup.) that the epistle was Paul's, but written by the apostle in *Hebrew*, and carefully translated by Luke into *Greek*—whence he accounts for the similarity of diction which it presents to the Acts of the Apostles. And then his great disciple Origen follows. He habitually quotes the epistle as St Paul's; and in one part of his writings distinctly attributes *fourteen* epistles to that

Hebrews, whoever he was, had written *anonymously*, and doubtless he had good reason for doing so. *If* the writer was St Paul, then St Clement, who was an intimate friend of the apostle, and wrote soon after his decease, would know and respect those reasons, and would be guided by them." This observation is equally applicable to the modified as to the absolute view of the Pauline authorship; but it seems utterly impossible to give any explanation of the silence of Clement, if the epistle were written by *Apollo*s, and addressed, as Alford believes, to the Church of Rome.

\* I here assume, as is generally done, that by the expression *μακάριος πρεσβύτερος* employed by Clement, (loc. cit.,) he means *Pantænus*, although Credner remarks on this point, (Einl., § 189,) that it is "kein-  
esweges so sicher als angenommen wird."



apostle. It is true that when he comes to give his own opinion respecting the epistle, he introduces, as Clement had done, some modifications into his ascription of it to St Paul, and still more correctly than his master, furnishes us with the hint which seems sufficient to harmonise all the facts connected with the epistle. His words are (*Euseb.*, H. E., vi., 25)—“Expressing my own view on the question, I would say that the *thoughts* belong to the apostle, but that the *style and composition* are due to one who put on record the apostolic ideas, and, as it were, commented on the expressions employed by his master. If any church, therefore, holds this as the epistle of Paul, let it by all means be commended for so doing. For not without reason have the ancients handed it down as Paul’s. But who *wrote* the epistle, God alone truly knoweth. The report which has reached us is twofold: some saying that Clement who was bishop of Rome wrote it; and others, that Luke was the writer, the same who wrote the Gospel and Acts.”

Alford’s comment on this important passage is as follows (ut sup., p. 7):—“Who the ἀρχαῖοι ἄνδρες were, it is impossible for us to say. Possibly, if we confine our view to one church, no more than Pantænus and Clement, and their disciples. One thing is very plain, that they cannot have been men whose παράδοσις satisfied Origen himself, or he would not have spoken as he has. Be they who they might, one thing is plain, that their παράδοσις is spoken of by him as οὐκ εἰκῇ, not as resting on external matter of fact, but as finding justification in the internal character of the epistle; and that it did not extend to the fact of St Paul having written the epistle, but only to its being in

some sense his." To my mind this seems a very inadequate representation of Origen's meaning. In the first place, the attempt to limit the expression "the ancients" to Origen's own teacher and his predecessor at Alexandria, is so plainly inadmissible as to require no remark.\* And then the further assertion that the *παράδοσις* spoken of by Origen, is to be regarded as resting on the internal character of the epistle, is, as appears to me, to miss the point altogether. Had Origen meant any such thing as Alford maintains, he would surely not have used the expression "handed down" (*παραδεδώκασι*) at all, but would rather have said that "the ancients not without cause *supposed* or *affirmed* the epistle to be Paul's." The obvious meaning of the passage seems to be this. Origen informs us that there was an ancient tradition connecting our epistle with the apostle Paul. He also acknowledges the validity of this tradition, so much so as to approve of the conduct of any church which attributed it *pur et simple* to the apostle. But then he believed that the tradition left room for some modification of this idea respecting the Pauline authorship. He was inclined, on internal grounds, to attribute the *thoughts* to Paul, the *composition* to another. That other he does not definitely fix, but mentions Clement and Luke as both having been named in connexion with the writing (the secondary authorship) of the epistle.† How far the

\* Hug gives the expression ἀρχαῖοι ἄνδρες no more than its natural import when he says, (Intro., Fosdick's translation, ii., § 147,) "This expression, used by a man in the third century, has a very important meaning, and would seem to carry us back *near to the times of the apostles*."

† That the much-controverted clause τίς δὲ ὁ γράψας τὴν ἐπιστολήν, τὸ ἀληθὲς θεὸς οἶδεν, refers not to the mere scribe, or to the author of the νοήματα, appears to me manifest from the scope of the passage.

report which had thus reached him was true, he does not undertake to decide. But he leaves, as I humbly think, the tradition which, in some sense, ascribed the epistle to St Paul, on ground which is unassailable. And it is, I believe, to take up a position entirely different from that of Origen, when any one imagines himself, as Alford does, at liberty to cast aside the external evidence altogether, and to support the claims of any name different from that of the apostle, to the *sole* authorship of the epistle.

The result, then, of our inquiry into ancient testimony on the question now before us, is that we proceed to the investigation of the contents of the epistle itself, with a decided leaning towards Paul as being, *in some sense*, its author. It may turn out, on an examination of the internal evidence, that we find reason to yield fully to this leaning, and accept of the apostle as the sole author of the epistle; or that we are compelled to resist it, and deny that he had any hand whatever in its composition; or, finally, that we are led to rest in some such conclusion as Origen, ascribing the thoughts and subject-matter to Paul, while we attribute the peculiar character and style of the epistle to another. I proceed then briefly to consider the internal evidence, as it bears on these three positions;—and let us look—

First, At the hypothesis of *the exclusively Pauline authorship*.

Origen expresses no doubt, so far as he was himself concerned, as to the author of the *substance* of the epistle; his only doubt refers to the person who gave it its special character and form. Alford, therefore, appears wide of the mark when he states, as one of his inferences from the passage, (ut sup,) “*that the authorship of the epistle was regarded by Origen as utterly unknown.*”

As may have been gathered from what has been already said, I cannot acquiesce in this conclusion. It seems to me opposed by the whole character and style of the epistle. I do not, however, quite see the force of some of the objections which have been brought against this hypothesis. No insuperable difficulty appears to me to arise from the passage (chap. ii. 3) in which the writer speaks of himself as, with his readers, having received the gospel at second-hand, and not directly from Christ, as Paul earnestly claims for himself in other epistles. Luther, Calvin, and many other eminent critics, have deemed this of itself decisive against the Pauline authorship. They have also dwelt very much on the absence, in this epistle, of personal allusions to the writer's own position and history; and have found in this, as contrasted with the well-known habit of St Paul, a reason for denying that he could have been the author of this epistle.\*

Now, in my humble judgment, such arguments as

\* Both objections are put very strongly by Dean Alford. With respect to the former, he says, (p. 44,) "That an apostle, who ever claimed to have received the gospel, not from men but from the Lord himself,—who was careful to state that when he met the chief apostles in council they added nothing to him, should at all, and especially in writing (as the hypothesis generally assumes) to the very church where the influence of those other apostles was at its highest, place himself on a level with their disciples as to the reception of the gospel from them, is a supposition so wholly improbable, that I cannot explain its having been held by so many men of discernment, except on the supposition that their bias towards the Pauline authorship has blinded them to the well-known character and habit of the apostle." Again, in reference to the other objection, he remarks, (p. 45,) "Much stress has been laid, and duly, on the entire absence of personal notices of the writer, as affecting the question of the Pauline authorship. This is so inconsistent with the otherwise invariable practice of St Paul, that some very strong reason must be supposed which should influence him in this case to depart from that practice." Comp. also p. 47.



these proceed to a great extent on a forgetfulness of the special character which *ex hypothesi* attaches to the epistle. Supposing it Paul's, it is designedly anonymous. He feels from the first, that there are special circumstances attending the composition of this work. He sits down to it with the resolution *not*, as in his other epistles, to begin with the mention of his name, or the assertion of his apostolical authority. And having begun in this manner, it would have been to run counter to his own design, had he afterwards violently obtruded his personality on the attention of his readers. While he manifestly did not wish absolutely to *conceal* his identity, as appears from the end of the epistle, he as manifestly did not wish strongly to *suggest* it, as is plain from the beginning. And in such a case, the fact that he quietly identifies himself with his readers in chap. ii. 3, and the absence of marked individual traits throughout the epistle, seem to me in no degree to tell against its Pauline origin. All the characteristic tendencies of the apostle must of necessity have been kept in check throughout, else he might as well have begun at once with a declaration of his name, and an assertion of his status as an apostle, as we find him doing in his other epistles.

But while I cannot attribute to the above arguments that weight which many eminent critics have assigned them, I am still led, on other grounds, to say with Calvin, "Ego ut Paulum agnoscam autorem adduci nequeo." The reasons which specially weigh with me in forming this conclusion, are just those which so greatly impressed Origen of old. "Every one," says that learned father, (*Euseb., ut sup.,*) "who is capable of noting differences of style, will admit that

the character of the diction of the Epistle to the Hebrews does not possess the uncouthness of the apostle, (who confessed himself rude in speech, that is, in style,) but that it is more purely Grecian in its composition." The same fact has been dwelt upon by many distinguished scholars in modern times. Erasmus, for example, remarks, after noticing other reasons which induced him to deny the Pauline origin of the epistle, "*Restat jam argumentum illud, quo non aliud certius, stilus ipse et orationis character, qui nihil habet affinitatis cum phrasi Paulinâ.*" This argument indeed, of difference of style, has often been pushed to a ridiculous excess in judging of the authenticity of several books of the New Testament. There has been an absurd and unnatural attempt made by certain critics to tie down the writers of Scripture to the use of a stereotyped style, however different the moods in which they may have written, and even to the employment of the very same vocables, however diverse the subject of which, at different times, they treated. But still the argument from style, in any question bearing upon authorship, is necessarily a strong one, ("*quo non aliud certius,*" as Erasmus puts it,) and this is specially the case in writings so much distinguished for their naturalness as are those of the New Testament,—writings in which, as was formerly noticed, the individuality of the several authors so strikingly appears.

I believe, then, that the hypothesis of the exclusively Pauline authorship of our epistle must be abandoned. The character of the writing itself is decisive of this point. It seems impossible, on grounds confirmed by universal experience, that such a composition could

have proceeded from the same pen that wrote the Epistle to the Galatians, or the Epistles to Timothy and Titus. And if a candid examination of the epistle must convince every competent judge of this fact, as it *has* convinced the most learned of the Fathers, the most illustrious of the Reformers, and the great majority of eminent biblical scholars in modern times, no considerations of authority, prescription, or expediency must be allowed to interfere with the conclusion. It is curious to observe that although both Luther and Calvin, as well as Erasmus, expressed themselves strongly, at the epoch of the Reformation, against the Pauline authorship, there has been since then, as Alford remarks, (p. 38,) “a growing disposition, both in the Romish and in the Reformed Churches, to erect into an article of faith the Pauline origin, and to deal severely with those who presumed to doubt it.” As was to be expected, this tendency has displayed itself most strongly among Romanists. With them, of course, ecclesiastical authority is everything. If the *Church* has settled any disputed point, then reason must be silenced for ever. And it is lamentable to notice the shifts to which thinking men within the Romish communion are thus not unfrequently reduced. What could be more mournful, for instance, than the way in which a scholar like Erasmus felt himself constrained to write with respect to this very question? Having ventured, as we have seen he did, to deny the epistle to be Paul’s, the doctors of Paris assailed him with the greatest virulence, and accused him of having written “arroganter et schismaticè,” as presuming to doubt what so many divines, councils, and popes had already determined.

Erasmus was frightened by this thunder, and in his reply to these vehemently-orthodox champions, declared that while “*juxta sensum humanum*,” he could not believe the epistle to be St Paul’s, yet, if the Church had really determined the question, he would yield all to her authority. “*Id si est*,” he says, “if she requires us to hold not only that what is contained in the canonical books is *true*, but also that the persons to whom they are ascribed *certainly* wrote them,” then, “*damno ac rejicio dubitationem meam*; plus apud me valet expressum Ecclesiæ judicium, quam ullæ rationes humanæ”! It is matter for thankfulness that the spirit of these Sorbonne divines, who thus violently repressed the intelligent convictions of one infinitely better qualified than any among them to give a judgment on the point in question, has to a great extent disappeared, at least in Protestant Churches. A better disposition has happily begun to prevail. Truth alone is now acknowledged worthy of absolute homage, and in the conviction that rational and reverent inquiry can never injure its authority, “we have at last,” says Dean Alford, (p. 62,) “in this country begun to learn that Holy Scripture shrinks not from any tests, however severe, and requires not any artificial defences, however apparently expedient.”

We now proceed to consider—

Secondly, The hypothesis of *the exclusively non-Pauline authorship of our epistle*.

The possible names that present themselves to us on this supposition, are those of Barnabas, Luke, Clement, Mark, Titus, Apollos, Silvanus, Aquila. Of these, Barnabas is supported by the testimony of Tertullian, who, quoting Heb. vi. 1, expressly styles our epistle



“Epistola Barnabæ.” But this opinion, though accompanied by no doubtfulness on the part of Tertullian,\* seems never to have prevailed to any great extent in the Church. It is certain that if Barnabas wrote that epistle which is current under his name, he could not also have written the Epistle to the Hebrews. The two are in many respects diametrically opposed to each other, and cannot with any probability be ascribed to the same author. And even though this objection to Barnabas being the writer of our epistle be set aside, by supposing (as is almost certainly the case) that the epistle bearing his name is spurious, we cannot see why, if *he* had written the Epistle to the Hebrews, it should not have been generally ascribed to him. We know of no plausible reason which, on the hypothesis of his being the author, can be assigned for its anonymousness, or for the almost complete silence respecting his name which is observed by antiquity. On the whole, while the supposition in question is one which it is difficult to *refute*, from the very little we know of the mental capabilities and characteristics of the person referred to, it has hardly any positive evidence on which to rest, and cannot, I believe, maintain its ground against the tradition, which, in one form or another, ascribes our epistle to St Paul. The hypothesis again, that Luke was the *independent* writer of the epistle is to my mind sufficiently negatived by the fact that the personal notices which it contains, and the tone of authority, however gentle, which it exhibits, do not tally with such a supposition. How far Luke was, in

\* It has been adopted by *Wieseler* in his “Chronologie des Apostolischen Zeitalters,” pp. 504, &c., as what he deems the best supported of all the traditions, and is favoured by *Conybeare and Howson*, ii., p. 513, &c.

our view, concerned in the *composition* of the epistle, will appear afterwards. It is certain again, that Clement could not have written this epistle, and also the epistle to the Corinthians which we possess under his name ; and, as the authenticity of the latter is unquestionable, the hypothesis of his being the writer of the former is at once proved untenable.

These three names then being set aside, there are none of the others which were enumerated, that seem to have any plausible claims to the authorship, with the exception of that of *Apollos*. It is well known that Luther was led to hazard the conjecture that, in this eloquent Alexandrian teacher, we may find the much-sought writer of our epistle. This hypothesis of the reformer has been embraced by not a few eminent critics, and among these are some of the very highest rank in modern times. Credner, Tholuck, Bleek, De Wette, Alford, and others, all agree in holding that to Apollos probably is the authorship of the epistle to be ascribed. And, as such names are of themselves sufficient to indicate, much plausibility can be imparted to this supposition. The account of Apollos which Luke gives us in the Acts of the Apostles, when he describes him as “a certain Jew born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, mighty in the scriptures,” may certainly be regarded as harmonising with the characteristics presented by our epistle. Alford makes the most of the probability thus imparted to his hypothesis, and seems to find support for it in some very fanciful coincidences.\*

\* He remarks respecting Apollos, (p. 58,) “He is described as *ἐπιστάμενος μόνον τὸ βάπτισμα τοῦ Ἰωάννου*, but being more perfectly taught the way of the Lord by Aquila and Priscilla. No wonder then that a person so instituted [instructed?] should specify *βαπτισμῶν διδαχή* as one of the components in the *θεμέλιον* of the Christian life, (Heb. vi.

All we can admit in reference to Apollos, as the supposed author of the epistle, is that its literary character suits very well with the hypothesis. The eloquence attributed to him by St Luke, and the large and powerful use which he could make of the Old Testament scriptures, might certainly be regarded as illustrated in its contents. But when we have admitted thus much, all has been said which can be specially urged in support of the authorship of Apollos. Acquaintance with Paul, which is mentioned by Alford as another reason in his favour, was shared by many others, such as Barnabas and Luke, and therefore proves nothing. The Alexandrian character of the epistle again, which has been much insisted on by some, even though admitted to all the extent contended for, really imparts little, if any, additional plausibility to the theory under consideration ; for it cannot be doubted that Barnabas as a native of Cyprus, which was closely connected with Alexandria, and Luke as a man of general culture who could hardly fail to be acquainted with the writings of Philo, might easily have displayed such familiarity

2.)” Here we seem to find an illustration of the ease with which fancied support may be found for a hypothesis already assumed as true. Although Apollos is described as “knowing only the *baptism* of John” when he was found by Aquila and Priscilla, yet that does not surely imply that the doctrine of baptism was a thing on which his mind specially dwelt, or that when these better-instructed Christians “expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly,” they were particularly anxious to impress upon him the nature of Christian baptism as distinguished from that of John. The meaning of the passage simply is this, that when Apollos met with Aquila and Priscilla, he had not obtained fuller or clearer views of the gospel than the forerunner of the Saviour had announced, and that they were instrumental in conveying to him that complete evangelical knowledge of which, till now, he had been destitute. Still more fanciful is Alford’s argument in the same passage from the use of the term *παρρησιάζεσθαι* by *St Luke* in the Acts, and the occurrence of the word *παρρησίαν* in chap. iii. 6 of this epistle.

as the epistle suggests, with Alexandrian modes of thought and literature.

And any presumption which may be supposed to arise in favour of Apollos from the style of the writing, speedily gives way, I believe, when confronted with some other facts connected with the epistle. In the first place, his name was never associated with its authorship by the ancient ecclesiastical writers. Alford makes very light of this objection, but in my humble judgment it is of itself fatal. Had there been the least ground for attributing the epistle to an Alexandrian Jew, for such Apollos was, surely we should have found some conjectures or affirmations to that effect in the church of Alexandria. But, as we have seen, it is exactly *there*, that no room is left for such a supposition. It is at Alexandria that the tradition as to the Pauline origin is most speedily and specially prevalent; and among the modifications of this opinion mentioned by Clemens Alexandrinus and Origen, the name of Apollos is never whispered as having the slightest connexion with the epistle. This total silence appears unaccountable on the hypothesis of the authorship by Apollos, and seems of itself to render such a theory untenable. And then, in the second place, the *tone* of the epistle is such as does not harmonise with the supposition of Apollos being its author. This is the case even granting that it was addressed to the church at *Rome*. The *ὁψομαι ὑμᾶς*, (chap. xiii. 23,) as Alford himself admits, “has a tinge of authority about it, which hardly seems to fit” such a person as Apollos. The same is the case with the words *ἀποκατασταθῶ ὑμῖν*, (chap. xiii. 19,) which seem to imply such a relation subsisting between the writer and the readers as we



have no reason to believe existed between Apollos and the church of Rome. The objection arising from these personal references is, of course, much stronger, if we regard the epistle as having been addressed to the church of Jerusalem ; and thus we feel ourselves once more constrained entirely to set aside the hypothesis that Apollos was the author of the epistle. Again, in the third place, it seems impossible on such a theory of the authorship, to assign any satisfactory reason for the *anonymity* of the epistle. We find Dean Alford indeed, not only not admitting that there is any difficulty to the adoption of his hypothesis in this fact, but even reasoning as if it actually favoured it. He tries (p. 60) in a manner which I must confess appears to me more ingenious than convincing, to bring out “the self-denying modesty of Apollos,” with respect to the church at Corinth ; and then, after concluding (p. 61) that “the same spirit of modest self-abnegation would hardly be wanting in Apollos, to whatever church he was writing,” he expresses himself (p. 71) as follows :—“Supposing, as we have gathered from the notices of Apollos in First Corinthians, that he modestly shrunk from being thought to put himself into rivalry with St Paul, and that after the death of the apostle he found it necessary to write such an epistle as this to the church in the metropolis, what more likely step would he take with regard to his own name and personality in it, than just that which we find he has taken ; viz., so to conceal these, as to keep them from having any prominence, while by various minute personal notices he prevents the concealment from being complete?” In my humble judgment, this is ingenuity completely thrown away. Why Apollos should conceal his name to avoid

all risk of being thought to enter into rivalry with St Paul, after that apostle was *dead*, I am somewhat at a loss to conceive. And what danger there was of any such person as Apollos, however eloquent or eminent, succeeding in drawing too much of the respect of the Roman church, and thus detracting from the high esteem in which the great apostle, now also revered as a blessed martyr, was held, I am quite unable to comprehend. Had such an idea as this entered into the head of Apollos, and led him to write anonymously to the Romans, I should have been inclined, for my own part, to think him animated by a very different principle from that extreme *modesty* for which Dean Alford has given him credit. Surely, if he wished to disclaim all rivalry with the Apostle Paul, nothing would have been easier than for him to *say* so; and we might have looked in his epistle for some such warm tribute of homage and affection to "our beloved brother Paul," as we find embodied in the Second Epistle of Peter. The explanation, then, of the anonymousness of the epistle which is suggested by Alford will not stand; far less can it be supposed to give any countenance to his hypothesis. He does not, so far as I can see, at all succeed in removing the difficulties which immediately spring from the ascription of the sole authorship to Apollos; and thus we conclude that every form, even the most plausible, in which the exclusively non-Pauline origin of our epistle has been maintained, is unsatisfactory, and must be dismissed.

Nothing remains therefore, but that we adopt—

Thirdly, The hypothesis of a *twofold authorship of the epistle*—Paul supplying to a large extent its matter, and setting his seal on its authority, while

another actually composed it, and thus imparted to it the special style and character which we find it to possess.

As already hinted, this is the only theory which seems to me to afford any tolerable solution of the many difficulties connected with this epistle. It corresponds exactly with the prevailing tradition in the early Church regarding it. The ancient testimony which ascribed the epistle to St Paul is satisfied. The anonymousness of the epistle is also naturally explained. For while, according to the view proposed, it is quite justifiable to style the epistle St Paul's, as is so generally done by the Fathers, and is popularly done at the present day, yet it plainly would not have been proper that it should have borne his name, as is the case with all his other epistles. And, approaching the more special point to which our investigations are directed, we may easily conceive that St Paul would not deem it expedient to obtrude his personality in writing to the church of *Jerusalem*. He was known as the apostle to the *Gentiles*. Yet, though such was his official designation, he had always retained a very warm interest in his brethren in Palestine. As Delitzsch beautifully remarks, "It is one of the finest features in the character of the Gentile apostle, that, as desire after Jerusalem was not restrained by the prospect of bonds there awaiting him, so now it was not weakened by the endurance of bonds coming upon him from that city." \* He gladly took an opportunity during his last imprisonment of instructing, stimulating, and warning the Christians of Palestine, to whom he now courteously gives the title of *Hebrews*,

\* *Commentar zum Briefe an die Hebräer*, p. 705.

though he had formerly refused to acknowledge the right of the Judaisers at Corinth to appropriate that designation. At the same time, while looking back upon a former period of intercourse with his Palestinian brethren, and forward to the time when that intercourse might be renewed, he did not, as in his epistles to the Gentile churches, judge it becoming or expedient that he should directly address them in the tone and with all the authority which pertained to an apostle.

Adopting, then, the view sanctioned by antiquity, that the epistle is in substance Paul's, but not his immediate production, we have next to seek from among his usual attendants one to whom its secondary authorship may be ascribed. As we have already seen, there are three of these referred to in this connexion by the ancients,—viz., Barnabas, Clement, and Luke. And if one of these is to be chosen, I have no hesitation in fixing upon St Luke. It is absolutely certain that he was long and intimately connected with the apostle. He is spoken of (Philem. ver. 24) as one of the *συνεργοί* of Paul, and we learn afterwards (2 Tim. iv. 11) that the evangelist continued with him when many others had forsaken him. Indeed, Luke seems to have been one of the most faithful and beloved of the apostle's friends, and to have remained in attendance on him to the very last. If, then, other particulars will suit, we seem to have found in him exactly the person most likely to be employed in the composition of this epistle. His relation to Paul is altogether such as would mark him out for the writer of whom we are in quest; and we have now to inquire whether or not the characteristics of



the epistle are of a kind to harmonise with this hypothesis.

That the phraseology is in striking harmony with such a supposition is generally admitted. Grotius (Proleg. in Ep.) suggests for comparison the following passages :—Acts xxiii. 20 with Heb. v. 7 ; Luke xiii. 11 with Heb. vii. 3, 23 ; Acts vi. 3 and xvi. 2 with Heb. vii. 8 and xi. 2, 5, 39 ; Luke ii. 26 and Acts x. 22 with Heb. viii. 5 ; Luke xxii. 26 with Heb. xiii. 7, 17 ; Acts iii. 15 and v. 31 with Heb. ii. 10 and xii. 2. And Alford himself observes, (p. 53,) “The students of the following commentary will very frequently be struck by the verbal and idiomatic coincidences *with the style of St Luke*. The argument, as resting on them, has been continually taken up and pushed forward by Delitzsch, and comes on his reader frequently with a force which at the time it is not easy to withstand.” Of course, Alford, with the views which he has adopted, finds it necessary to “withstand” the evidence which is thus acknowledged so weighty, and tries to account for the Lucan phraseology of our epistle on other grounds than the natural one of its having been written by the evangelist. The positive objections which he brings against this view, appear to me both weak in themselves,\* and to derive any seeming strength which they

\* For example, we read, (p. 45,) “Within the limits of the same heavenly inspiration prompting both, St Luke is rather the careful and kindly depicter of the blessings of the covenant ; our writer rather the messenger from God to the wavering, giving them the blessing and the curse to choose between : St Luke is rather the polished Christian civilian, our writer the fervid and prophetic rhetorician.” With the sincerest respect for the learned writer’s critical acumen, I cannot but think that it is here considerably astray. There is surely no psychological law which can prevent an author from being at one time the messenger of peace, and at another time the herald of judgment ;

possess from the supposition that Luke is maintained to have been the *independent* author of the epistle. With regard to the difference of style which may be thought to exist between Luke's other writings and this epistle, we must remember that he had evidently a *great* command of the Greek language—that his style varies in its character much more than that of any other New Testament writer—that there is certainly as great difference between the Preface to his Gospel and other parts of his acknowledged writings, as there is between this epistle and any portions of the Gospel which bears his name, or of the book of Acts ; and that therefore, considering the mastery which he possessed of the beautiful and flexible tongue of Greek, we need have no difficulty, so far as style is concerned, in regarding him as the *writer* of this epistle.

In short, though I am very far from asserting that absolute *certainly* has been reached in the matter, I cannot but believe, with Delitzsch,\* and some other critics, that the view now given of the origin of our epistle—neither is it true that a uniform tone of sternness pervades our epistle, as the words of Alford just quoted might lead us to suppose. On the contrary, there are passages in it (ii. 14–18, iv. 14–16, xii. 9–13) which are unsurpassed in tenderness within the whole compass of the New Testament ; while, on the other hand, there are passages in other parts of Luke's writings (*e.g.*, Luke xxiii. 29–31 ; Acts xiii. 40, 41) which embody at least as severe announcements as any to be found in our epistle.

\* As a specimen of what ingenuity can do in favour of our hypothesis, I may mention that Delitzsch argues in its support from the fact of Luke having been a *physician*, (Col. iv. 14.) He thinks this in striking correspondence with the contents of the epistle. It contains, so to speak, an *anatomic* portion, (chap. iv. 12, seq. ; ) a *dietetic* portion, (v. 12–14 ; ) and a *therapeutic* portion, (xii. 12, seq. ) Also, incidental expressions in it, such as *ἰαθρὸς*, *βρώματα καὶ πόματα*, which occur in Hippocrates, suggest a writer, he thinks, who was familiar with that great medical authority in the ancient world. These may be fancies, but are not altogether unworthy of consideration.

nishes an explanation of many facts which are otherwise unaccountable, and that the objections which may be brought against it are unimportant. It falls in exactly with the prevailing tradition of antiquity. It accounts naturally for the markedly Pauline and Lucan characteristics which are both presented by our epistle. It suggests reasons for the anonymousness of the writing, which seem quite satisfactory. It helps us to explain why, while Clement of Rome ascribes so much authority to the epistle, neither he nor any of his successors for a considerable period refer it to any particular author. And lastly, it seems exactly to suit the personal notices which are contained in the epistle, and which almost of necessity suggest St Paul as the person to whose position and circumstances alone they can be accommodated.

And here, perhaps, I may be allowed a conjecture which has already, in a somewhat different form, been offered by others. It seems to me probable that the closing verses of the epistle are from the apostle's own hand. Supposing that Paul had any share in its composition, this was to be expected, for he says, (2 Thess. iii. 16, 17,) in language which will immediately strike every one as bearing a close resemblance to that employed in our epistle, "Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all. The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, *which is the token in every epistle*: so I write." We would expect, then, in the close of our epistle, to find some indication of its Pauline origin, if it at all proceeded from the apostle. And, as is obvious, its concluding verses are very similar to those with which he winds up several of his acknowledged epistles.

But, then, how are we to mark the point at which the directly Pauline portion begins? Some have supposed the transition to be made at the 17th verse, and that thus the last nine verses of the epistle are to be ascribed immediately to the apostle. There does not appear any insuperable objection to this supposition, but I am not quite inclined to adopt it. I would rather suppose that the transition occurs at the 19th verse, in which it will be observed that the *first person singular* is employed.\* I conceive that St Luke, having said in the 18th verse, "Pray for *us*, for we are confident we have a good conscience, desiring in all things to act becomingly," laid down the pen, and that then St Paul himself taking it up, repeated in his own person the exhortation with which his friend had concluded, saying, "And *I* the more earnestly (or abundantly) entreat you to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner." I make this suggestion with great deference, yet cannot help thinking it worthy of some consideration. And it appears to me supported by the expression *περισσότερως*, which would thus be the first to rush from the glowing pen of the apostle. This is peculiarly a Pauline word. It does not occur at all in the writings of Luke, unless we take into account this epistle. An analogous form, indeed, is found oftener than once in his Gospel; but the term before us is specially a favourite of St Paul's, (2 Cor.

\* It may be remarked that, properly speaking, the singular pronoun occurs here for the *first* time in the epistle. The reading at chap. x. 34 should be *τοῖς δεσμοῖς*, and not *τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου*, as in the Text. Rec.; while it is a mere rhetorical use of the first person singular which occurs at chap. xi. 32, corresponding to the French *On*, or the German *Mann*. The plural is used in all the other passages in which the first person is employed,—chap. ii. 5, v. 11, vi. 9, 11, xiii. 18—a fact hardly without significance.



i. 12 ; Gal. i. 14 ; Philip. i. 14 ; 1 Thess. ii. 17, &c.) ; and seems very naturally to fit in with the supposition that it commenced that part of the epistle peculiarly appertaining to the apostle.

We may conclude, then, with Origen, "If any church holds this epistle as Paul's, it is in this matter worthy of commendation." According to the view which has been presented, it is perfectly proper to inscribe the epistle with the name of the great apostle, though it was not the immediate product of his pen. *His* presence overshadowed, so to speak, its composition ; *his* thoughts were expressed by the freely-working mind of its accomplished writer ; and his *own* hand, I am inclined to believe, added the verses, so redolent of his ardent Christian affection, with which it closes. In a word, LUKE WITH ME (Λουκᾶς μετ' ἐμοῦ) might have been the account of the authorship given by the apostle himself, had he seen fit to make any statement regarding it ; as we certainly know that Luke only *was* with him at a period somewhat later in his history, (2 Tim. iv. 11,) when, having resigned all hope of being permitted again to visit the Jerusalem upon earth, he was looking forward to a speedy removal to the "Jerusalem which is above."

We are now fully prepared for entering on the consideration of that other question connected with the Epistle to the Hebrews, which has such an important bearing on the proposition maintained in this work respecting the prevalent language of Palestine at this period—I mean the question as to the *readers* to whom the epistle was primarily addressed. It has already been incidentally stated in the previous dis-

cussion, that, in my judgment, these were specially the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The great peculiarity of the epistle—its anonymousness—seems most easily explicable on this supposition. For, if Paul had any hand in its composition, as we have seen reason to believe, we can easily perceive why he should not desire to force his name very prominently before his brethren in Palestine. It certainly is quite in harmony with the apostle's generally wise and conciliatory conduct, that, while he now felt himself called upon to address that portion of the Church with which he had always had the least sympathy, he should gladly make use of the services of his faithful associate as a means of avoiding those peculiarities of style by which his own writings were so markedly distinguished, and should abstain from mentioning his own name in the course of the epistle. Thus the Pauline origin of the epistle, in any sense, being established, the fact of its being *anonymous* seems to me at once to suggest that its primary destination was Palestine ; but we must now inquire more particularly into the reasons which may be assigned for this conclusion.

The title of the epistle, as it stands in the best manuscripts, is simply *Πρὸς Ἑβραίους*. It has been doubted by some, whether even this had existed in the autograph of the writer, though if it be admitted that the composition is an epistle, it must also be allowed to have had a special designation from the first, and that could hardly have been simpler or shorter than the title quoted. But then, after the epistolary character of the writing is acknowledged, and after its inscription to the Hebrews is also

admitted, the question arises—*Who were the Hebrews* intended as the primary readers of the epistle? I have already had occasion to state and illustrate the meaning which I conceive ought to be attached to the term *Ἑβραῖοι* in the New Testament.\* We saw that these as distinguished from the *Ἑλληνισταί* denoted the strictly national party among the Jews, and that, as was to be expected, these were principally to be found in Palestine. In consistency with this view, I believe that the epistle before us was primarily addressed to the church of Jerusalem, though intended, of course, to have an influence upon all “Hebrews” throughout the world. It is not necessary therefore, on our ground, to attach any other meaning to the term *Ἑβραῖοι*, as used in the superscription of this epistle, than what was formerly assigned it. But very different is it with those who imagine that the *Hebrews* of the New Testament were those who employed the Hebrew language. On that supposition, it is necessary to suppose either that this epistle was written in Hebrew, or to give here a different explanation of the appellation in question, from what was formerly adopted. Neither of these alternatives is very pleasant to a biblical scholar; but one or other of them must be chosen by all who maintain that the *Hebrews* referred to in the Acts of the Apostles were so called specially on account of their employment of the Hebrew language.

On looking into the epistle itself, we seem at once to find strong confirmatory evidence of the justness of the conclusion, already suggested by the title, that its primary destination was Palestine. The familiarity which

\* See above, Chap. V., pp. 145–165.

it takes for granted, on the part of its readers, with the temple services, and with the whole enactments and observances of the Levitical economy, as well as the danger, which it constantly assumes they were in, of attaching an undue importance to the peculiarities of Judaism, harmonise exactly with the conclusion which has been stated, that the epistle was originally addressed to Palestine. And this accordingly has, in spite of one great difficulty to be immediately noticed, been the opinion of the vast majority of biblical critics. The ancients with one voice acquiesce in this conclusion. Clement of Alexandria, Jerome, Chrysostom, and others, all suppose the epistle to have been addressed to the Christians of Palestine. And in our own day, Hug, Tholuck, Bleek, Delitzsch, with many other eminent scholars, are of the same opinion. The whole complexion of the epistle is generally felt to be such as necessarily suggests that it was at first intended for such readers as Palestine, or more properly Jerusalem, could alone specially produce ; and particular allusions, such as that found at chap. xiii. 12, (ἔξω τῆς πόλεως,) seem to lead naturally to the same conclusion.

But then, this epistle having been written in *Greek*, how could it have been addressed to the inhabitants of Palestine, or still less, specifically to those of Jerusalem? Was not *Aramaic* their ordinary language, and could they have understood any other? Or, supposing that Greek was, to some extent, intelligible to them, would any one who desired to obtain a favourable hearing from them have addressed them in that language? Surely, their vernacular tongue would have been employed in such a case as that of our epistle, which must, on many accounts, from its obvious purpose and



express declarations, have been peculiarly distasteful to them ; and we must therefore conclude that the Hebrews here addressed were not the inhabitants of Palestine, but some other community of Jewish Christians to be sought for in a different part of the world.

Such is the great difficulty which has weighed with many modern critics, and induced them, in defiance of some very obvious considerations, to look about for some other body of Judaic Christians to whom the epistle might be supposed to have been sent, than the church in Palestine. The various devices which have been tried to escape the difficulty, are all, to my mind, utterly unsatisfactory. In ancient times, most of the fathers avoided the perplexity which has been felt by modern biblical scholars, by first supposing, and then asserting, that the epistle was not originally written in Greek but Hebrew. This hypothesis (for it is nothing more) is certainly an easy way of escaping the difficulty. But then, it is almost universally admitted at the present day to be untenable. Michaëlis indeed adopts it, and thus avoids the hard problem forced upon other critics, only, however, to be opposed at all hands by the phenomena presented by the epistle itself.\* Moses Stuart finds a sort of compromise between the difficulties connected with the question, by conceiving that the Hebrews addressed were those of Cæsarea. He cannot deny that the work bears evident marks of having been intended for Palestinian Christians ; but, as Jerusalem, according to the common view, could not have furnished readers capable of understanding

\* I deem it needless to take up any space with the illustration of this statement. Every one admits its force, as may be seen in any of the recent critical works on the epistle.

it, he has recourse to the political capital of Judæa as a place in which the Greek tongue may be admitted to have been well understood. Conybeare and Howson again, argue that "a letter to the church of Palestine would surely have been written in the language of Palestine," and think that, while this consideration, above all others, serves "to negative the hypothesis that this epistle was addressed to a church situated in the Holy Land," there are several circumstances connected with it which "point to another church for which we may more plausibly conceive it to have been intended, namely, that of Alexandria."\* And Alford (*ut sup.*, p. 64) expresses himself against the Palestinian designation of the epistle on various grounds, the first mentioned of which is as follows:—"The language and style of our epistle, if it was addressed to Jews in Jerusalem or Palestine, is surely unaccountable. For, although Greek was commonly spoken in Palestine, yet, on the one hand, no writer who wished to obtain a favourable hearing with Jews there, on matters regarding their own religion, would choose Greek as the medium of his communication (cf. Acts xxii. 2.) . . . . And, on the other hand, not only is our epistle Greek, but it is such Greek as necessarily presupposes some acquaintance with literature, some practice not merely in the colloquial, but in the scholastic Greek of the day. And this surely was as far as possible from being the case with the churches of Jerusalem and Palestine." He is led therefore, on this among other grounds, to deny that the Hebrews of our epistle were the inhabitants of the Holy Land, and by a chain of reasoning which few readers, I venture to think, will deem satis-

\* "Life and Epistles of St Paul," vol. ii., p. 512, Orig. Edit.

factory, he appears to himself to find them among the Jewish Christians of *Rome*.

Such are some specimens of the mazes of speculation in which biblical critics have been involved, by supposing that it was necessary to seek for the readers specially addressed in this epistle, somewhere out of Jerusalem. On the one hand, it is obvious that none but Judaic Christians could have been primarily in the eye of the writer, and that the designation which the epistle bears on its front, as well as several of the references which it contains, seem to point naturally to the church of Palestine. But, on the other hand, the epistle is written in Greek, and that of such a kind as to argue familiarity with that tongue on the part of its readers; and the Old Testament quotations are taken from the Septuagint even when that version differs materially from the Hebrew. These facts excite no surprise, and create no difficulty, if the conclusion which I humbly think has been established in the preceding chapters of this work be admitted. On the contrary, they harmonise with it exactly, and readily lend their aid to illustrate and confirm its correctness. But, on the common supposition with respect to the prevailing language of Palestine at the time, the facts which have been mentioned at once prove exceedingly troublesome; and being deemed incompatible with the belief that the inhabitants of Jerusalem could have been intended as the primary recipients of this epistle, necessitate a search for the persons specially addressed in some other portion of the world.

The dilemma, thus presented to biblical scholars, is undoubtedly formidable in both its aspects. As experience has proved, it is certainly a very difficult

thing to find a community of Christians anywhere out of Palestine, to whom this epistle can, with any preponderating probability, be viewed as having been originally sent. Every church almost, which had any connexion with Paul and his associates, has been fixed upon by different writers. Various lists of these may be found in the critical works on our epistle, and are so comprehensive as almost to exhaust the geographical notices which appear in apostolic history. The following is the list presented by Alford, (p. 66 :)—“Wall believed the epistle to have been written to the Hebrew Christians of Proconsular Asia, Macedonia, and Greece ; Sir I. Newton, Bolten, and Bengel, to Jews who had left Jerusalem on account of the war, and were settled in Asia Minor ; Credner, to those in Lycaonia ; Storr, Mynster, and Rinck, to those in Galatia ; Lyra and Ludwig, to those in Spain ; Semler and Nösselt, to those in Thessalonica ; Böhme, to those in Antioch ; Stein, to those in Laodicea ; Röth, to those in Antioch ; Baumgarten-Crusius, to those at Ephesus and Colossæ.” It can scarcely be said that any one of these hypotheses possesses much advantage in point of evidence over the others. As their variety suggests, they have been adopted more from caprice, than on any solid grounds of argument. And, as Alford justly observes, “If it was to any one of these bodies of Jews that the epistle was addressed, we know so little about any one of them, that the holding of such an opinion on our part can only be founded on the vaguest and wildest conjecture. To use arguments against such hypotheses, would be to fight with mere shadows.”

But, if too *little* is known of the circumstances of the several churches mentioned above, to render the



supposition that our epistle was addressed to any one of them more than the most fanciful conjecture, I am afraid that too *much* is known of the condition of that church, the pretensions of which Alford himself upholds, to permit us to entertain his hypothesis. After Wetstein, and a very few other scholars, he supposes, as has been already noticed, the destination of the epistle to have been Rome. This idea must be admitted, I think, to be *à priori* improbable; and when we come to examine the circumstances of the case, it appears to me utterly untenable. Not to mention other objections which might be brought forward, a careful comparison of the Epistle to the Romans with that to the Hebrews seems to render the fact as plain as need be desired, that the two epistles were not directed to the same church. Even supposing that Paul had nothing to do with the composition of our epistle, and that its sole and independent author was Apollos, we cannot conceive that, within a few years (at most, ten or twelve) two apostolic men should have drawn such different pictures of the condition of the *same* church, as are set before us in these two passages.

## ROM. xv. 14.

“And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, *filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.*”

## HEB. v. 11, 12.

“Ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, *ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God.*”

The strong antithesis presented by these two passages seems wholly to have escaped the notice of those very few critics who have favoured the hypothesis of Alford, and appears to me abundantly sufficient, without another word, to refute the opinion that the original

destination of our epistle could, by any possibility, have been Rome.

The only other hypothesis which requires to be noticed, is that which supposes the epistle to have been addressed to the church of Alexandria. A good deal may certainly be said in favour of this supposition. There was a Jewish temple at Leontopolis in Egypt, to which, as Wieseler has argued, the allusions contained in our epistle more exactly correspond than to that at Jerusalem. But this is an assertion which cannot be made good. Even Philo, Alexandrian as he was, when at any time he speaks of *the temple*, always refers to the sanctuary of God on Mount Zion. And then, had the Jews of Alexandria been intended above others, they surely would not have been addressed under the general appellation of *Hebrews*. Whether the common explanation, or that which I have suggested, be attached to that term, it would, as applied to Alexandrian Jews, have amounted to a misnomer. They neither employed the Hebrew language, nor were they distinguished for their strict adherence to the exclusive character or peculiar observances of Judaism, but were *Hellenists* in every sense of the word. The utter absence also in the early and frequent references which are made to our epistle by Alexandrine writers, of any hint that it was originally addressed to the church in that city, furnishes a negative proof, which is to my mind conclusive, that the place of its destination was certainly not Alexandria.

We rest, then, in the ancient opinion that this epistle was addressed to the Jewish Christians in Palestine. In maintaining this position, I do not, of course, mean to assert that the epistle was intended to be

confined to any particular church. Like all the other epistles, it was meant to have an encyclical character, and to possess an enduring value. The church of Jerusalem, I believe, first received it, as it was there the *Hebrews* were specially to be found. But it was intended for the instruction of Christians throughout the world, and especially for all those who, as Jews by birth, were in danger of keeping up the Judaic spirit within the Christian Church.\* It was also meant to be serviceable to the end of time, and is indeed felt by all readers of the New Testament at the present day to be one of the very richest portions of the apostolic writings. But all this has no influence on the question now under consideration. That question simply is—"Who were its original readers?" and the answer which, following ancient testimony and internal evidence, I give to the question is, that it was primarily addressed to the church of Jerusalem.

Leaving out of sight, in the meantime, the supposed difficulty which rises up against this opinion from the *language* of the epistle, all the other objections which have been brought against its Palestinian designation appear to me rather to favour that conclusion. As has been already observed, the relation between St Paul and the church at Jerusalem, seems to have been exactly that which will alone account for the anonymousness of the epistle. The salutation in chap. xiii. 24, (*ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας*), of which Alford says (p. 65) that it is impossible on our hypothesis to

\* If the special designation of the epistle be admitted, a point which seems to me certain from the particular allusions which it contains, the words of *Euthalius* exactly express the view given above. He says of St Paul that, "having written to all the Gentiles," he also at last wrote "*πᾶσι τοῖς ἐκ περιτομῆς πιστεύουσιν Ἑβραίοις*."

give any satisfactory explanation, appears to present no difficulty whatever. We learn from the last chapter of the Acts, (ver. 21,) that the Jews in Jerusalem and Rome were in the habit of constant communication with each other ; and if, as I believe, the epistle was written from the one city to the other, nothing could have been more natural than that the Christians of *Italy* (used rather than *Rome* probably to denote that members of several churches in the district besides that of the capital joined in the salutation) should have sent their kind Christian greeting to their brethren in Palestine. The other objections of Alford are derived from “the historical notices in our epistle,” and appear quite as groundless as that which has just been mentioned. “The great notice” he says, “of chap. ii. 3, would be strictly true of any church rather than that of Jerusalem, or those in Palestine generally.” He presses this objection, however, very faintly ; and no wonder, for surely it was most natural that Jewish Christians in Palestine, who had perhaps, some of them, seen and heard the Saviour himself, but who had at any rate enjoyed the teaching of *all* the apostles, should be addressed in these terms—“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him ?” Again, he argues that the “historical notice found at chap. vi. 10 (διακονήσαντες τοῖς ἁγίοις καὶ διακονοῦντες) would be less applicable to the churches of Jerusalem and Palestine, than to any others.” He takes for granted here that the διακονία predicated, can refer only, or chiefly, to pecuniary assistance. But, although that was one mode of ministering to the



saints, it was not the only one, nor even the one on which most stress is laid in the New Testament. It is *personal* service that is always spoken of as furnishing the greatest proof of affection—a service like that of Christ himself, who tells us, (Matt. xx. 28,) “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to *minister* (διακονῆσαι);” and there is not the least ground to suppose that such a ministering as this, if no other, was not practised even by the poorest of the Christians in Palestine.

But we must now glance at the other horn which the dilemma, formerly mentioned, presents to those who hold the common opinion respecting the language then most prevalent in Palestine. Believing that modern Hebrew, or Aramaic, was the tongue constantly employed and greatly preferred by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, they cannot, without the grossest inconsistency, suppose such a writing as that now before us to have been addressed to them. It would have been *ex hypothesi* unintelligible to the majority, and must have gained very little favour even among those who could spell out its meaning, from the partiality which these also are supposed to have felt for their native language. It is plain, then, that all who hold that Aramaic was at that period the common or favourite tongue among the Jews of Palestine, and that Greek was not, as I believe, the language which they habitually employed for all public purposes, are bound to seek some other community to whom this epistle was addressed, than can be found among the Judæo-Christians of the Holy Land.

The difficulty of finding any other church, which can, with even tolerable probability, be supposed to

have first received our epistle, has already been pointed out ; and this fact, of itself, ought to render those who hold the opinion in question as to the prevailing language of Palestine at the time, suspicious that they may be labouring under some mistake. The epistle, in fact, left to speak for itself both by its designation and its contents, just proclaims over again very emphatically what has been so fully proved in the preceding pages, that Greek was then *thoroughly familiar* to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Admitting, as everything seems to require we should do, that it was directed to Judæa, we cannot doubt that its author wrote in a tongue which he was sure that his readers well understood. And I cannot but remark here, that the answers which have often been given to those who affirm that if the epistle was addressed to Jewish Christians in Palestine, it must have been written in their national language, and that consequently the Greek which we now possess must be regarded as a translation, are, to a great extent, irrelevant and inconclusive. Take for example, the following, which we find in the last edition of *Horne's* Introduction. "To this argument" (viz., that if the epistle was addressed to Palestine, it must have been written in *Hebrew*) "it has been replied, *first*, That if it was proper that the apostle should write to them in the Hebrew tongue, it must have been equally proper for him to write his letter to the Romans in their own language ; yet we know that St Paul's Epistle to the Romans was not written in Latin, the language of Rome, but in Greek ; nay, that all his epistles, and those of the other apostles were written in Greek, and not in the languages of the churches and persons to

whom they were addressed. *Secondly*, The apostolical epistles being intended for the use of the whole Christian world in every age, as well as for the persons to whom they were sent, it was more proper that they should be written in Greek than in any provincial dialect; because the Greek language was then universally understood. The arguments adduced to shew that Greek was the original language of the New Testament generally, are equally applicable to prove that the Epistle to the Hebrews was never written in Hebrew.”\*

The only clause in this quotation which appears to me really to bear upon the question, and to be worthy of being called an argument, is this one, “The Greek language was then *universally understood*.” That being admitted, there is no longer any difficulty in the fact, that both the Christians of Jerusalem and Rome were written to in the Greek language. But to attempt to parry the objection against the Greek original of our epistle, by replying that the same objection will apply to the Greek original of the Epistle to the Romans, is just to *double* the difficulty, instead of removing it. And to say that it was more proper that the writings of the New Testament should be composed in Greek than in the special dialects of those to whom they were expressly addressed, is to make an assertion which cannot be maintained; unless it be admitted, as is contended for in this work, that through many concurring providential circumstances, it had been brought about that the persons primarily addressed *understood* Greek as well as their own vernacular language. In a word,—and again to state the conclusion to which

\* *Horne and Tregelles*, “*Introd.*,” vol. iv., p. 569.

in this, as in the previous chapters we are led,—a THOROUGH ACQUAINTANCE with Greek, at Jerusalem as well as Rome, is the only thing which will rationally account for the Christians of these two cities having been written to in the language and style which we find employed both in the Epistle to the Romans and in the Epistle to the Hebrews.



## CHAPTER VII.

FURTHER PROOFS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT THAT  
GREEK WAS THE PREVAILING LANGUAGE OF PALES-  
TINE IN THE TIMES OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.

It is proposed, in this chapter, to subject the views contended for in the preceding pages to a sort of cross-examination. There are several phenomena presented in the New Testament, which have been felt perplexing, if not inexplicable, on the opinion which has generally prevailed as to the language usually employed by the Saviour and His followers ; and I desire now to employ these both as tests and evidences of the soundness of the opposite theory sought to be established in this work. The decisive proof of the validity of any hypothesis is, that it explains all the phenomena in question. As Aristotle has remarked, "*Everything connected with a subject harmonises with the truth regarding it ;*"\* and if we have, in fact, reached the truth respecting the point discussed in the previous chapters, we may justly expect that difficulties, otherwise formidable, will vanish when set in the light of it, and that, through its means, problems will be easily

\* "Τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἀληθεῖ πάντα συνάδει τὰ ὑπάρχοντα."—*Arist.*, "Nic. Eth.," i. 8.

solved, which remain insoluble on any hypothesis of error.

There is, then, one great difficulty which has been felt and acknowledged by some of those able and candid critics who hold that Aramæan was the only language with which natives of Palestine could properly be said to be familiar at the time referred to—and that is, how to account for the very considerable command of Greek possessed by all the writers of the New Testament, and by some of them more than others. The idea long prevalent of ascribing this to a miraculous interposition, is now for the most part abandoned. And the question then comes to be—How such a man as St James, for example, who never apparently left Palestine all his life, should have been able to write such Greek as is found in the epistle bearing his name? The diction and style of that epistle are universally admitted to make a comparatively near approach to the classical models of Greek composition. Expressing the opinion which prevails on this point among biblical critics, Dean Alford remarks, “The Greek of our epistle is peculiar. It is comparatively free from Hebraisms; the words are weighty and expressive; the constructions for the most part, those found in the purer Greek.\* . . . *The Greek style of this epistle must ever remain, considering the native place and position of its writer, one of those difficulties with which it is impossible for us now to deal satisfactorily.*” †

\* Thus also, continental critics. *Credner*, e.g., says of this epistle, “Der Verfasser des Briefes legt eine feinere Bekanntschaft mit der griechischen Sprache an den Tag.”—*Einl.*, § 219. And *Thiersch* describes it as “Ein Brief welcher an Feinheit der griechischen Diction zu den hervorragendsten Abschnitten des Neuen Testaments gehört.”—*Versuch.*, &c., p. 52.

† Greek Test, vol. iv., part i., proleg., p. 107.

The sentence which I have printed in italics, contains a candid admission of the difficulty which the style of this epistle presents to every one who holds the prevalent views with respect to the relation then subsisting between the Greek and Hebrew languages in Palestine. To all who agree with the eminent writer quoted, that Syro-Chaldaic was the prevailing language of the country, the problem which is suggested by the Greek diction of this epistle of James must ever remain, as he frankly confesses, one of which it is hopeless to attempt the explanation.

But should not the very fact of such difficulty being felt, on the ground assumed by Alford and others, lead them to doubt whether, in standing where they do, they may not be in error? The hypothesis which they make with respect to the knowledge of Greek then possessed by the inhabitants of Palestine, is one which must be tested by facts, and it confessedly fails when set face to face with some of them. But surely, if the philosopher of old could say that "there is in *nature* nothing interpolated, or without connexion, as in a bad tragedy," we may as confidently affirm that there is nothing in *Scripture* which is really out of harmony with the circumstances in which the inspired writings were composed. And when this epistle of James, on being appealed to in evidence either of the validity or unsoundness of that opinion which is generally held by scholars as to the knowledge of Greek then possessed by the natives of Palestine, is found to declare against them, should not that fact of itself suggest a doubt whether they may not possibly be mistaken? Under the pressure of that difficulty which they

acknowledge to be connected with this epistle, may they not, without offence, be asked to reconsider their position, and to inquire whether there be not another way of looking at the point in question, by which all the facts of the case are easily explicable, and no residuum of unexplained difficulty remains to perplex and baffle the critical student ?

That the position maintained in this work entirely neutralises every such difficulty, is too plain to need any lengthened remarks. On the ground which I have assumed and sought to make good, nothing could be more natural than that even the Palestinian James should write in the style which characterises his epistle. He lived in a country where the Greek tongue was constantly employed. On almost all public occasions he used it himself and heard it used by others. In the civil transactions taking place between the Romans as masters, and the Jews as subjects ; in the ecclesiastical courts held under the presidency of the high priest in Jerusalem, and in the Christian assemblies which met in the same city, with the apostle himself at their head, we have found that it was the tongue of Greece which was habitually employed.\* In these circumstances, James could not but acquire a large acquaintance with that noble language. Continual use may easily be supposed to have given him such a command of it as appears in his epistle. And his very permanency in one settled sphere of labour would afford him an opportunity, which the other apostles did not possess, of becoming acquainted with some of the literary treasures which it contained. It seems, indeed, too plain to be disputed,

\* See above, Chaps. IV. and V.



that he had read at least the works of some of the learned Jewish writers of the religio-philosophical school of Alexandria; and he could not have been familiar with the almost classical writings of Philo, without contracting some of that purity and polish by which they are so remarkably distinguished, and which are, in fact, so apparent in his own very elegant epistle.\*

Moreover, it may be noticed here, that the conclusion set forth in this work with respect to the prevalence of Greek in Palestine, is not only such as alone enables us to explain the appearances presented by the Epistle of James, but is also in striking harmony with some of the most ancient accounts which have been transmitted to us concerning its author. Hegesippus, who wrote about the middle of the second century, gives such an account of the apostle as necessarily implies his familiar acquaintance with Greek, and also the common employment of that language in his day by the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The description of the apostle's character and death, quoted from that earliest of Church historians by Eusebius, (H. E., ii. 23,) certainly contains not a little that is strange and questionable in itself, while it exhibits perhaps an irreconcilable discrepancy with the account of James given by Josephus (Antiq., xx. 9, 1); but the particular parts of his narrative, to which alone I refer, do not suffer from any

\* *Credner*, after remarking that the Epistle of James bears many traces of the author's acquaintance with the Greek apocryphal writings, adds: "Insbesondere ist es kaum glaublich, dass die Schriften eines Mannes, wie Philo, der mehrmals als Abgeordneter der Juden zu Alex. in Rom gewesen war, in Palästina hätten ganz fremd bleiben sollen. In der That zeigt unser Brief des Jacobus vielfache Berührung mit den Schriften Philo's."—*Einkl.*, § 219.

such objections. They clearly shew that in the opinion of Hegesippus, (himself probably a native of Palestine, and who is styled by Jerome “vicinus apostolicorum temporum,”\*) as well as of those from whom he received the tradition, that both James and his fellow-citizens were perfectly familiar with the Greek language. He informs us that the unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem, deceived probably by the leaning which, as we learn from Scripture, James always shewed towards the Mosaic institutions, desired him at the feast of the passover to use his great influence in their favour, by persuading the multitudes, then assembled in the holy city, not to accept the prevailing notions respecting Christ. For this purpose, they requested him to take his position on the pinnacle of the temple, that, as they said, “thy word may be plainly heard by *all the people*, for, on account of the passover, *all the tribes are now here together*, ALONG WITH THE GENTILES.”† These words clearly imply that James was to speak in a language common to both the foreign and Palestinian Jews, as well as to the heathen proselytes, and that could be no other than the Greek. The same writer is quoted (*Euseb.*, ut sup.) as declaring finally respecting St James, “This man was a true witness both to *Jews and Greeks* that Jesus is the Christ;”‡ a statement which, as well as the former, naturally implies his familiar and habitual use of the Greek language.

\* See the article “Hegesippus,” by Weitzsäcker, in Hertzog’s “Real-Encyclop.”

† “Συνεληλύθασιν πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ μετὰ καὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν.” See the whole account, *Euseb.*, loc cit.

‡ “Μάρτυς οὗτος ἀληθῆς Ἰουδαίοις τε καὶ Ἕλλησι γεγίνηται, ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν.”—*Ibid.*

I may next notice the fact, which appears to me a very important and suggestive one, that *all the records which we possess of our Saviour's teaching are contained in the GREEK language*. According to the common view, we have thus scarcely a single word of what He actually said. The language used by Him who spake as never man spake has perished. The words which He uttered while He tabernacled among men have died away on the ear of the world, and can never be recalled. All the tender, beautiful, and striking terms which He employed in sermon, or parable, or prayer, have been wiped out by the tide of time from the world's remembrance, so that scarcely a vestige of them remains behind. It is true that, on this hypothesis, we still have an inspired *translation* of His words ; and, granting that that is all, it is infinitely precious, the most valuable beyond comparison, of all the literary treasures which exist upon the earth. But let it once more be stated that, on the prevalent hypothesis, the whole of the actual sayings of the Son of God while manifested in flesh, have, with the exception of a very few Hebrew expressions, perished for ever.\* And here, without laying undue stress on mere subjective considerations, I may be allowed to ask—*Is this likely ?* Is it probable that, while the very words in which Moses pled with God, and David praised Him—the very words in which Isaiah

\* "Of Him," says Black, almost in a tone of exultation, "who spake as never man spake, not above a dozen original words have been preserved ; and of the divine Sermon on the Mount (with the exception of the word Raka) not a syllable is now extant."—*Palæoromaica*, p. 11. So *Greswell*, referring to the few Aramaic expressions contained in the Gospels, describes them as "the *only instances* in which the evangelists have preserved to us the very words of our Saviour."—*Harmony of the Gospels*, iii., p. 347.

foretold the sufferings and the glories of Messiah, and Daniel described the nature and the permanency of His kingdom—the very words in which Paul wrote of the grace of Christ as displayed on earth, and John detailed His glory as revealed in heaven, have all been handed down to us, and may still be read in their original form, *the words of the SON OF GOD*, if ever written at all, have, as it were, been “writ with water,” and only a reflection of them has been preserved? I cannot but feel, for my own part, that such a view is in the highest degree improbable; and if I must acquiesce in it, it shall only be at the authoritative and imperious command of evidence, which cannot, and ought not, to be resisted.

But, happily, evidence leads to no such conclusion. Not the least fragment of an Aramaic or Hebrew document has come down to us, to exemplify the original form in which the teaching of Christ is imagined to have circulated, and to give some colour, by its existence, to the opinion that He did in reality make use of the Hebrew language. All the hypotheses which have been framed respecting an *Ur-Evangelium*, an original Gospel in the national language of Palestine, are utterly baseless.\* And when we find, as we so often do find, in the writings of biblical critics, statements to the effect that there were numerous *Aramaic* accounts of our Lord’s discourses at first circulating, orally or in writing, among His followers, and that on these our present Greek Gospels are based,† we may

\* See this point fully illustrated in Part II., Chap. VI.

† Thus Dean Alford, (*Greek Test.*, vol. iv., part i., proleg., p. 64; comp. also vol. i., proleg., chap. i., sec. 3.) “There can be no doubt that the apostolic oral teaching on which our first three Gospels are founded was originally extant in Aramaic.” Thus also the writer in *Evan. Chr.*,



confidently inquire what ground there is for such an assertion? I regard it, indeed, as very likely, or rather certain, that some accounts of Christ's life and discourses were for a time extant in Aramaic as well as Greek. It naturally follows from the relation conceived in this work to have existed between the two languages, that such would be the case. And, perhaps, it may not unreasonably be supposed, that, as in the introductory chapter of St Luke's Gospel, such narratives were employed to a slight extent in the composition of the canonical Greek Gospels. But so far as respected our LORD's *discourses*, such Aramaic reports would not possess an advantage over the contemporary Greek records, but the reverse. And when it is maintained, as it usually is, that Aramaic narratives, either oral or written, really formed the foundation of the gospel-history at large, we may well ask, as said above, what proof can be produced in favour of such an allegation? It rests, in fact, upon nothing else than the preconceived notion that Aramaic was the language which Christ habitually spoke,—a notion which again rests itself in great measure, as we have seen, on the few Syro-Chaldaic expressions which are to be found in our existing Greek Gospels.

It would undoubtedly follow from the supposed fact that Aramaic was the language which our Lord and His disciples usually employed, that the first narratives containing an account of His and their actions would be composed in that language. This point was well formerly referred to, (Sept., 1860, p. 473,) "That there were original Gospels in Hebrew—that is, a Hebraistic dialect, Syro-Chaldaic Hebrew—not one merely, as Matt.'s, but several, perhaps even many—cannot possibly be doubted."

urged by a highly intelligent Syrian priest, with whom Dr Claudius Buchanan had some warm discussion respecting the original language of the Four Gospels. The following is the account given by the excellent writer of this very interesting debate:—"‘You concede,’ said the Syrian, ‘that our Saviour spoke in our language; how do you know it?’ From Syriac expressions in the Greek Gospels. It appears that He spoke Syriac when He walked by the way, (Ephphatha,) and when He sat in the house, (Talitha Cumi,) and when He was upon the cross, (Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani.) . . . . ‘But,’ added he, ‘if the parables and discourses of our Lord were in Syriac, and the people of Jerusalem commonly used it, is it not marvellous that His disciples did not record His parables in the Syriac language; and that they should have recourse to the Greek?’ I observed that the gospel was for the world, and the Greek was then the universal language, and therefore Providence selected it. ‘It is very probable,’ said he, ‘that the Gospels were translated immediately afterwards into Greek, as into other languages; but surely there must have been a Syriac original. The poor people in Jerusalem could not read Greek. Had *they* no record in their hands of Christ’s parables which they had heard, and of His sublime discourses recorded by St John after His ascension?’ I acknowledged that it was believed by some of the learned that the Gospel of St Matthew was written originally in Syriac. ‘So you admit St Matthew? you may as well admit St John. Or was one Gospel enough for the inhabitants of Jerusalem?’ I contended that there were many Greek and Roman words in their own Syriac Gospels. ‘True,’ said he,

‘Roman words for Roman things.’ They wished, however, to see some of these words. The discussion afterwards, particularly in reference to the Gospel of St Luke, was more in my favour.”\*

The Syrian was undoubtedly right in contending that if Syriac was the prevailing language of Palestine in our Saviour’s day, and the language accordingly which He employed in His preaching, then the first language in which accounts of His life and teaching were written was, of course, Syriac. And so the case stands, whatever the language which it is supposed He generally employed. If that be called Syro-Chaldaic, then in Syro-Chaldaic would the first accounts be written.† And in one important respect, these would possess an advantage over all others. They preserved the *ipsissima verba* of our blessed Redeemer—a peculiarity which could be shared with no version whatever. Were, then, these precious records thought utterly unworthy of preservation? and were they suffered so speedily to be eclipsed by a Hellenistic version? For my own part, I cannot believe that, had they ever existed, this would have been the case. As the Syriac priest remarked, a necessity might indeed soon arise in the Church for having the original documents translated into Greek; but is it to be supposed that when this happened, the ac-

\* Buchanan’s “Christian Researches in Asia,” p. 113.

† I again quote the words of the writer in *Evan. Chr.*, as follows:—“If our Lord preached in Hebrew, and the people heard and learned from His mouth in Hebrew, the first records of these things, which must have been written at the time they were preached and heard, must also have been in Hebrew. . . . In truth, that which we have aimed at establishing is, that the first narratives of our Lord’s sayings and doings were necessarily compositions in Hebrew, and not in Greek,” &c., p. 473.

counts taken down from our Lord's own lips would then be entirely neglected, and suffered utterly to perish? Is this in accordance with the universally recognised principles of human nature? And must we believe that Peter and John, those ardently attached followers of Christ, were willing to allow the records containing their beloved Master's words to fall into entire and hopeless oblivion? It surely will not be said that this was a likely course for them to follow; nor can I conceive that any will maintain that they were directed by the Spirit of God to act in such a manner, contrary to the tendencies of their own hearts. For, shall we assert that the Holy Ghost, the Author of all that is good, loving, and commendable in our natures, should have quenched those feelings in the bosoms of the apostles, which would have led them religiously and affectionately to preserve their Master's words? Far from us be such a thought; and while we feel how much temporary interest is still attached to any document which can persuade the world for a moment that it has preserved some more of the very words of the Son of God than we otherwise possess, we cannot but believe that those devoted disciples who were appointed to be Christ's "witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" would have taken care to hand down for the gratification of all coming ages those incomparably precious and sacred words which they themselves had once listened to as they issued from the Saviour's mouth.\*

\* It may be here remarked, that, notwithstanding the frequency with which the Syro-Chaldaic dialect is referred to by biblical scholars, we really possess no literary evidence beyond the few Aramaic expres-



The very fact, then, that it is in *Greek, and Greek only*, that the words of Christ have been preserved to us by His apostles, imparts, I believe, great additional probability to the opinion that that was really the language which He habitually employed. Admitting that such was the case, all is henceforth easy in connexion with the Gospels. The many wild notions which have arisen from the idea that He spoke in Aramaic; the vagaries of criticism respecting original Gospels in Hebrew, and translations of these piecemeal into Greek; the labyrinths of speculation into which, in the pursuit of such phantoms, eminent scholars have been led; and the scepticism or infidelity which has thus too frequently been engendered—are things well known to all that have looked into the history of this question, and are all quashed and set at rest for ever, by the simple truth which it is the object of this work to establish, that both Christ and His disciples habitually made use of the *Greek* language.

But passing from this point as to the origin of the Gospels, which will be found discussed at some length afterwards, I next remark that the very *existence* of

sions contained in the New Testament, that such a dialect had, in our Saviour's days, any existence. A statement occurs in the *Encyc. Brit.* (Art., Language, 8th edit.) as follows: "The Targums and the Talmud of Babylon are in the older Chaldee; and a *Syro-Chaldaic translation of the New Testament has been discovered to be still in existence.*" The writer probably refers in this last clause to the discovery of *Adler*, of which *Adelung* says, (Mithridates, i., 373),—"Entdeckte in Rom eine bisher ganz unbekannte Uebersetzung des N. T. im Syrish-Chaldaischen Dialect. Die Handschrift war 1030 geschrieben, die Uebersetzung aber zwischen dem 4ten und 6ten Jahrhundert." This version of the *Gospels* is now known as the Jerusalem-Syriac; and according to Dr Tregelles, "the barbarism of the Syriac seems hardly consistent with a date so *early* as that assigned by Adler."—*Horne and Tregelles*, p. 287.

what is known as the Hellenistic dialect of Greek, seems to point to, and certainly fits in exactly with the conclusion which is here sought to be established. A somewhat futile disputation was formerly carried on among scholars respecting the proper name of this dialect, supposing its existence admitted. As the controversy was conducted between such illustrious scholars as Salmasius and Heinsius, it may now be clearly seen to have been a mere strife about words.\* No one can read the Greek New Testament without perceiving that it is written in a peculiar kind of Greek. He may indeed refuse to allow that it ought to be styled a *dialect* in the same sense in which that term is applied to those varieties of language which were employed in different parts of Greece and her dependencies ; but that it had its own characteristics, as much as any of the recognised dialects of classical Greek, is evident from the slightest inspection of the Gospels and Epistles. Not more manifestly does Herodotus differ from Xenophon, or Theocritus from Sophocles, than St Matthew or St Paul differs from all. The language in which the apocryphal books of the Old Testament, and the canonical books of the New Testament are written, is as peculiarly *sui generis*, as is the style of the Attic and Ionic poets, or historians of Greece. Now, how did this peculiar dialect arise ? And how did it come to be so widely used, that we have many more

\* *Salmasius*, while admitting the marked peculiarities of the New Testament Greek, denies, on some technical grounds, that it ought to be styled a dialect. See his treatises "De Lingua Hellenistica" and "Funus Ling. Hell ;" *Heinsius*, on the other hand, contends, with undue eagerness, that the Greek of the New Testament had the same title to be called the *Hellenistic* dialect as any of the classical dialects to bear their peculiar designations. See his "Exerc. de Ling. Hell."

works extant in it than we possess in some of the classical dialects of the Greek language? Allow the common view as to the prevailing language of Palestine in the time of Christ to stand, and these questions appear utterly insoluble. Syro-Chaldaic, it is said, was *the* language of the country, and "Greek was probably only understood at the capital or seaport towns."\* How, then, did the dialect used by the human authors of the New Testament arise? and how did it reach that maturity which manifestly appears in their employment of it? Could the use of Greek by a few scholars accustomed for the most part to write in Hebrew, or in a few cities, which by their very employment of such a language, were, on the hypothesis in question, cut off from all intimate sympathy with the great body of the Jewish nation, have led to its existence and cultivation? It is not thus that dialects are usually formed. They spring up, not in the libraries of the few, but in the homes of the many—not from the practice of learned and elaborate writers, but from the rough and ready utterances of those who meet at church or market, and are there accustomed to address each other in language which is naturally tinged by national characteristics and habits. No sort of *saltus* could have been made by Jews, accustomed to the almost exclusive employment of the Hebrew language, to the use of such Greek as appears in the New Testament. The very fact, therefore, that the inspired writings exhibit such a formed and distinct species of diction, seems necessarily to presuppose the general and long-continued use of the Greek language among the people at large. A learned writer like Josephus could

\* *Even. Chr.*, May 1860, p. 287.

have given little or no help to the formation of such a dialect as appears in the New Testament ; for, as is evident on an inspection of his works, and as he expressly tells us, he took care to avoid national and provincial peculiarities, and to write as much as possible in the style and character of the accepted models of Greek composition.

It is to be observed, moreover, that it is by natives of *Palestine*, almost exclusively, that we find the so-called Hellenistic dialect employed. The writers of the New Testament (if we except St Paul and St Luke) all belonged to that country. And even the two sacred writers excepted had lived so much in Palestine, that, on this ground alone, we naturally expect to find them composing their works in the style of Greek there prevalent. But, of course, the causes which had given rise to the Hebræo-Greek dialect of Palestine, also operated, to some extent, among the Jews throughout the world. These were all accustomed to Hebrew modes of thought, and to the Hebraised diction of the Septuagint translation. At the same time, they were more free from the influence of national peculiarities, and more likely to make an approach towards pure Greek composition, than could, in general, be the case with inhabitants of Palestine. Hence we find such a writer as Philo among the Jews of Alexandria in the first century of our era. Josephus, a Palestinian Jew, may make an approach towards the purity of his Alexandrian contemporaries ; but, as he confesses, it is not without much labour and difficulty. And St James, though resident in Jerusalem, may write in a style of comparative elegance and freedom from Hebraistic idioms ; but this, too, is a somewhat rare exception



to the diction usually employed, and is to be accounted for on the grounds formerly mentioned. The true type of Palestinian Greek is to be found in the other writings of the New Testament. The Epistles of St Peter, and the Gospels of St Matthew and St Mark, above all, perhaps, the Apocalypse of St John,\* furnish specimens of the Greek which inhabitants of Palestine, who had passed through no scholastic training, then naturally employed. The writings of the New Testament exhibit this dialect in various degrees of cultivation; but they are all so closely, and, as it were, organically, connected together by the common possession of its peculiarities, as to be necessarily assigned to writers who had been subject to the same influences, and lived in the same age and country.† And it may be observed, that if St Luke and St Paul, in some portions of their writings, particularly in the concluding chapters of the Acts, and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, depart more than any other of the sacred writers from the type of Greek generally exhibited in the New Testament, this is just what was to be expected in the case of such as had travelled so much, and enjoyed such various culture, as was certainly the case with both these writers.

But it may be said that the dialect in question was

\* See this point further noticed in Part II., Chap. VII.

† *Thiersch* justly remarks: "Die sprachliche Charakter der heiligen Schriften, und das Genus der Literatur, dem sie nicht eigentlich angehören, sondern welches sie vielmehr selbst constituiren, ist so eigenthümlich und trägt in allen seinen Theilen so sehr das Gepräge der Originalität, dass der wahre Erforscher der Sprachengeschichte, und Beobachter verschiedenartigen Gestaltung des Styls, allerdings die bedeutsamsten Kriterien der Aechtheit dieser Werke im Gantzen darin zu entdecken vermag."—*Versuch zur Herstellung des historischen Standpunkts für die Kritik der neutestamentlichen Schriften*, Erlangen, 1845, p. 43.

founded upon the *Septuagint*; and we may to a certain extent admit that this was the case. There can be no doubt, I believe, that all the sacred writers were thoroughly familiar with the version of the LXX.; and that its style had no little influence on the diction which they themselves employed. But I cannot allow that a mere acquaintance with the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures furnishes any adequate explanation of the point under consideration. If, indeed, it be acknowledged that the Septuagint was in such common use among the inhabitants of Palestine, as to form in fact the Bible which they generally employed, all is granted for which I contend: and I care not to discuss the point whether this common use of the LXX. implied, on other grounds, the existence of the dialect in question, or was itself the means of giving it currency throughout the country. But if it be said that Peter and John and Matthew wrote in the peculiar Greek exemplified in their works, simply because they followed the *model* presented by the Septuagint,\* I must deny the sufficiency of the cause assigned. The studied imitation of the style of a work not generally read in the country, could never have given rise to the dialect which we find to have so generally prevailed, even though it were possible to suppose that sufficient motive otherwise existed to lead to such a studied

\* Thus *Thiersch*, ut sup., p. 58, seq., and, more or less definitely, many other writers. *Bishop Malby* observes, in language which I humbly conceive to set forth truth with some admixture of error, "Greek was the language to which *all Jews* whatever, whether living in Palestine or elsewhere, became habituated, *in consequence of* the translation of their ancient Scriptures into that tongue."—*Sermon*, ut sup., p. 18.

imitation. The influence of the Septuagint may have been strongly felt by the New Testament writers, but could never have led them to compose their works in the diction which these exhibit, had not that, on other grounds, been the character of the language which they habitually employed.

Besides, it is certain that the Septuagint was universally employed by the Jews of Egypt, yet the Judaic writers of that country were very far from either designedly or unconsciously imitating its style. Philo, as was formerly shewn, depended entirely for his knowledge of the ancient Scriptures upon the Greek translation, yet his writings are framed on the classical, and not the Hellenistic model ; and the same thing is true of the fragments which have come down to us of the works of other Judæo-Egyptian writers belonging to this period. Palestine alone can be said to be the country in which the dialect exhibited in the New Testament flourished. In their native land did the apostles learn the style of Greek in which their writings are composed ; though, of course, subsequent practice and travel in other Greek-speaking countries somewhat modified the diction which they employed. With far greater reason, therefore, might the Greek of the New Testament be styled *Hebraic*, or *Palestinian*, than Hellenistic—a term which is in every respect inappropriate ; and the vigorous existence of such a dialect in Palestine, in the days of Christ and His apostles, can only, I believe, be accounted for on the ground that it was then the PREVAILING PUBLIC LANGUAGE OF THE COUNTRY.

Again, let us consider how the conclusion just stated

corresponds with the facts which present themselves in the New Testament, with respect to *the use of the Septuagint made by the sacred writers*. If the Greek language was so commonly employed among the Jews as is here contended for, then, of course, the version of the LXX. would also be generally used, and the quotations from the Old Testament contained in the New will bear testimony to that effect. This seems, in fact, one of the most crucial tests to which the validity of our proposition could be subjected. If the language generally employed by the natives of Palestine was Hebrew in any of its modifications, we naturally expect that their citations from the Old Testament would be made in the language of the original. And, on the other hand, if we find that this is not the case, but that the Greek version is generally followed, a very strong additional corroboration is furnished of the truth of that position here sought to be established.

Now, on glancing at the New Testament, we are instantly freed from all dubiety respecting the point in question. We see, at once, that the vast majority of its quotations are taken from the Septuagint. So manifestly is this the case, that hardly any one attempts to deny it.\* There are altogether above two hundred direct citations from the Old Testament in the New, besides almost innumerable references; and a great part of these are immediately seen, beyond all dispute, to have been derived from the LXX. Some writers have attempted to classify the quotations under

\* *Dr Davidson* expresses the almost universal judgment of biblical scholars on this point when he says, (*Horne's* "Introd.," ii., p. 175,) "In the great majority of cases, the Greek version must be regarded as the source whence citations in the New Testament are derived."



distinct heads, according as they appear to agree most with the Hebrew or the Greek; but this effort has not been attended with much success. The only *clear* result has been a demonstration of the vast preponderance of the citations manifestly made from the Greek over those which can be supposed to have been taken directly from the Hebrew. Other writers, such as Surenhusius,\* have sought to lay down rules by which from the introductory formulæ we might infer *à priori* the degree of accuracy with which the writer intended to quote. But this attempt also has proved a failure. Even the simple and common supposition that the New Testament writers were accustomed to quote from the Septuagint, except where it failed to represent correctly the original text, is one which cannot be maintained.† All that can be said is, that, beyond contradiction, the Greek version of the LXX. was the great source whence the apostles derived their Old Testament citations; and, without attempting to prove that they depended upon that source exclusively, I think it must at least be admitted that the fact stated points to their habitual use of the Greek, and not the Hebrew language.‡

\* See his "Βίβλος Καταλλαγῆς," preliminary observations.

† "Why the writers occasionally had recourse to the Hebrew is a difficult question to answer. Did they resort to it whenever the Greek was so incorrect as not to give the true sense? So it might be thought by such as reason *à priori*. But there are phenomena adverse to that hypothesis."—*Dr Davidson in Horne's Introduction*, ut sup.

‡ I do not feel myself competent to express a positive opinion as to the degree of acquaintance with ancient Hebrew which we are warranted to infer from their citations of the Old Testament as having been possessed by the evangelists and apostles. That is a very difficult and delicate question. I am fully convinced, on the one hand, that their knowledge of ancient Hebrew has often been much overrated; but I am not prepared, on the other hand, to affirm that it is doubtful

But that we may deal fairly with the subject, it is necessary to go a little further into detail. There is manifestly an important difference in regard to this matter between the quotations which occur in the Epistles, on the one hand, and those which are found in

whether even St Paul was familiar with the original text. Professor Jowett observes, in his very able essay "On the Quotations from the Old Testament in the New," ("Epistles of St Paul," vol. i., p. 401,) that of the eighty-seven quotations which he reckons as made by Paul in his epistles, "two-thirds exhibit a degree of verbal similarity which can only be accounted for by an acquaintance with the LXX.;" and thinks that the remainder still leave the question doubtful whether or not the apostle was acquainted with the ancient Hebrew. And Mr Grinfield, who is well known to have devoted himself long and earnestly to the consideration of this subject, speaks very decidedly on the point. Commenting, in a letter to the *Journal of Sacred Literature*, (July 1861, pp. 415-16,) on a remarkable note which appeared in the article on "Essays and Reviews" in the *Edinburgh Review*, (April 1861, p. 483,) and which must have arrested the attention of every reader, he says,— "We are convinced, from a life-long study, that the best antidote to doubts respecting the inspiration and authority of the New Testament will be found in the study of that Greek version of the ancient Scriptures which reigned supreme in the Christian Church for nearly four hundred years. We say nothing of its own inspiration *further than it is endorsed by Christ and the apostles*. But to illustrate and explain the New Testament, we must necessarily resort to that book, which Christ, the evangelists, and apostles knew by heart. There is no evidence to shew they were acquainted with original and biblical Hebrew, for wherever Hebrew words are introduced in the New Testament, they are couched in the vernacular Syriac of the day. Even the solemn exclamation from the cross is not expressed in the words of the psalmist. It is spoken in the vernacular dialect. Yet such are our Protestant prejudices, that in drawing up lists of the citations in the New Testament, we commonly compute about a moiety to be taken from the Hebrew text; but, as Mr Jowett remarks, they are all, more or less, traceable to the LXX., the constant text-book of Christ and His apostles; the perpetual memorial of St Paul in his epistles; and the embroidery of St John in the Apocalypse."

It furnishes another curious illustration of the combinations of opinion which have been held by scholars with regard to the points treated of in this work, that Mr G., while expressing himself thus strongly in respect to the habitual use of the LXX. by our Saviour and His disciples, yet holds that they *generally spoke in Hebrew!* See "Apology for the Septuagint," pp. 12, 76, 110.

the Gospels and some passages of the book of Acts, on the other. The Epistles being universally acknowledged as original compositions, there can be no doubt that the quotations were made by the writers exactly as we still possess them. But, on the supposition that Hebrew was the language generally employed by our Lord and His disciples, it is different with those quotations which occur in the Gospels, and in some portions of the Acts of the Apostles. Wherever Hebrew or a kindred language was used by the speaker, his citations would not, of course, be made from the Greek version, but from the Hebrew original. We may reasonably suppose therefore, that, on this ground, we will perceive a difference in the citations as they appear in the Gospels, and as they are found in the Epistles : we may expect to find something to indicate that, in the former case, we do not have the quotations in the same language in which they were made, while, in the latter, we do possess them in the very form in which they were adopted and applied by the sacred writers.

Looking, then, at the Gospels, and such portions of the Acts as may be thought to belong to the same category, we naturally anticipate, in the first place, that, on the supposition of Hebrew having been employed by Christ, and the various other speakers whose words are preserved in the narrative, the quotations will be seen exactly to harmonise with the original Hebrew text. But we soon find that this is not the case. Many of them, we discover, agree *verbatim* with the Septuagint, and that even in cases in which that version differs materially from the Hebrew. Our next supposition will then be, that, as the writers of the Gospels and Acts intended their works for the world

at large, in which the Septuagint version only was known, they preferred giving the quotations from the Old Testament, not in the form in which they were literally made by our Lord and others, but in the words of the LXX. Admitting this principle, we might have a tolerable explanation of the variations from the Hebrew text observable in the passages referred to; although it must be owned that, in some cases, not a little liberty would thus have been taken with the words which were actually employed by the different speakers.\* But then, we expect, of course, that if this was the principle on which the writers proceeded, it will be found consistently adhered to, so that by an application of it, we may be able to explain the phenomena presented by their works. If they preferred using the version of the LXX., even where that differed from the Hebrew, to giving an exact rendering of their own of the Hebrew words which were actually employed, then we cannot but suppose that they will use that version throughout, and not adopt and depart from it in any apparently random or capricious manner. But, again, facts prove hostile to our conclusion. We find that both in the Gospels and Acts, no less than in the Epistles, quotations from the Old Testament are given with all sorts and degrees of variation, both from the

\* Let me give a single illustration of this statement. Dean *Alford*, referring to the difficulty which has been felt in explaining the phrase, *λύσας τὰς ὀδῖνας τοῦ θανάτου*, (Acts ii. 24,) remarks, (in loc.,) “The fact seems to be, that Peter used the Hebrew words חֲבִלֵי-מוֹת, *Psa. xviii. 5*, ‘the *nets* or *bands* of death,’ i.e., the nets in which death held the Lord captive; and that, in rendering the words into Greek, the LXX. rendering of the word in that place, and *Psa. cxiv. 3*, viz., ὀδῖνες, has been adopted.” It is thus supposed that the apostle’s meaning has been to some extent misrepresented, by adopting the LXX. version instead of giving an exact translation of his words.



Greek and Hebrew. And thus, we are thrown back on the supposition that they were actually made as they have been preserved. No principle can be discovered which will account for the phenomena presented by those parts of the New Testament under consideration, if it be maintained that the citations referred to were originally made, not in the Greek, but in the Hebrew language. The only easy and satisfactory explanation of the extremely varied and complicated form in which they present themselves, is that they were at first made as they still exist,—sometimes *verbatim* from the Septuagint—sometimes in substantial accordance with that version, and manifestly derived from it, but altered according to the intention of the speaker, or differing slightly as *memoriter* quotations will necessarily do—and sometimes perhaps, though very rarely, made directly, by an independent translation into Greek, from the Hebrew original.\*

\* The various reasons which may be assigned for the differences often observable between the passages quoted by the New Testament writers and the text of the LXX., are well given by *Dr Alexander* of Edinburgh, in his learned and useful work on “The Connexion and Harmony of the Old and New Testaments :”—“Some of them are evidently the result of intention on the part of the writer or speaker ; as, for instance, where a word or phrase is added for the fuller exposition of the passage, or when such grammatical changes are made as are required by the context into which the quotation is introduced. Many of them, there is reason to think, are attributable to the circumstance, that since the days of the apostles the texts of Scripture have been subjected to numerous minute alterations, which have given rise to various readings, so that we cannot be certain that, at the time the autographs of the New Testament were issued, all the discrepancies existed which we now find on comparing their quotations with the LXX. This is confirmed by the fact that, in several instances where a discrepancy existed in the received text, it has been removed by a various reading supplied by some of the MSS. (The Alexandrian MS. of the LXX., *e.g.*, gives Isa. lxxv. 1 exactly as quoted by St Paul, Rom. x. 20.) In fine, it is to be remembered that the New Testament writers

It cannot then, I believe, be denied that the phenomena presented by the quotations from the ancient Scriptures which are imbedded in the New Testament, find their only explanation in the supposition that the Septuagint version was, for the most part, employed by our Lord and His apostles; and that, consequently, in accordance with the views set forth in this work, both He and they were in the habit of making use of the *Greek*, and not the Hebrew language.

In what language, I shall now venture to inquire, was the Hymn of the Virgin Mary (Luke i. 46-55) originally composed? No doubt, some will scarcely have patience for a moment to consider this question, but will at once reply that it was, of course, in Hebrew. Nevertheless, this does not appear so certain as might be thought. It has been noted by some of those who are very far from agreeing with the views set forth in this work, that the beautiful song of the Mother of our Lord is made up of "entirely Septuagintal expressions." \* On this ground,

appear to have, in the majority of cases, quoted from memory, which will easily account for their transposing and altering words and phrases, omitting words, or indicating in a general way, instead of fully quoting the passage to which they refer. That they chiefly quoted from memory must be admitted, when we consider the circumstances in which their writings were for the most part composed,—sometimes on a journey—sometimes in prison—very seldom, if ever, where access to books could be had; and observe the vagueness and generality which frequently characterise their references to the Old Testament scriptures; as when, instead of naming the book from which they cite, they merely say *ἔστι γεγραμμένον*, or *ἡ γραφή λέγει*, or, still more vaguely, *διεμαρτύρητο δέ που τις*, 'Some one has somewhere testified,' Heb. ii. 6; *Ἐίρηκε γάρ που*, 'he hath somewhere said,' iv. 4."—Pp. 33, 34.

\* *Grinfield's* "Apology for the Septuagint," p. 185.

it has been assumed that Greek, and not Hebrew, was the tongue which Mary then employed ; while, at the same time, it is supposed that her Divine Son generally made use of the Hebrew language. The incongruity of these two statements must, I think, be obvious to the reader. If there is really ground to believe that the Virgin, even in giving utterance in *private* to those feelings excited within her by the Holy Ghost, made use of Greek, much more must we suppose that this was the case with the Saviour in the course of His *public* ministry. It might be maintained that there is no reason to believe that Mary made use of any other language than Hebrew ; and *à priori*, there is nothing in the position maintained in this work which requires me to controvert such an assertion. But if, on examining the *Magnificat*, it is found to bear internal evidence of having been originally composed in Greek—and I agree with those who think so—then it seems impossible, without utter inconsistency, to deny that *Greek* was perfectly familiar at the period in question to the inhabitants of Palestine, and would, as a matter of course, be generally made use of by our Lord and His disciples.

I shall next refer to a passage of the Gospel of St Luke, which certainly fits in with, if it does not necessitate, the conclusion which has been already reached. We read, (Luke iii. 14,) that, among those who were attracted to the Baptist in quest of instruction, “the soldiers (στρατευόμενοι) likewise demanded of him saying, And what shall we do ? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely ; and be content with your wages.” Who the

soldiers here referred to were, we have no certain means of determining. If it be held that they were *Jews*, the passage has no bearing on our argument. But if, as is more probable, they were *Gentiles*,\* it seems next to certain that they could have conversed with the Baptist only through the medium of the Greek language. No doubt, soldiers stationed in a foreign country often pick up a slight acquaintance with the language of the inhabitants. But this happens rather from necessity than choice, and would not be likely to occur in cases in which a language common to both parties already existed. That the Roman soldiers stationed in Palestine remained totally unacquainted with Aramaic, is confirmed by the account given of Paul's conversion, which will immediately be considered. And as the idea of an interpreter being employed between the soldiers and the Baptist cannot be entertained for a moment, I think it will be admitted that, on the supposition of their having been Romans,† the inference is clear that John as well as Jesus, was accustomed to make use of the Greek language.

Again, we read (Acts xxii. 9) in the narrative of his conversion which Paul gives before the Sanhedrim,—“And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid ; but they *heard not the voice* of Him

\* It is worthy of notice that the Jerusalem-Syriac version, in the part published by Adler, translates *οἱ στρατιῶται*, (Matt. xxvii. 27,) by “Romans,” ܠܪܡܢܐ; as if no other *soldiers* had been known in the country. Comp. *Hug*, “Introd.,” i., § 79.

† *Diodati* attempts to prove that even the soldiers around the cross were *Jews*, but his reasoning is very far from satisfactory. See his work, ut sup., pars iii., cap. i., § 3.



that spake to me." But in the account of the same event given by the historian, (chap. ix. 7,) we are told that "the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, *hearing a voice*, but seeing no man." Some have fastened upon these two statements as involving a plain contradiction; and many of the attempts\* which have been made to explain the apparent discrepancy are evidently unsuccessful. But it humbly appears to me, that the key to the whole difficulty is found in the conclusion already reached, as to the language then commonly employed for all public purposes in Palestine, taken in connexion with the declaration made by the apostle in a third account which is given in the Acts, of the circumstances attending his conversion. Paul expressly tells us, (chap. xxvi. 14,) that the words then addressed to him from heaven were spoken "in the *Hebrew* tongue." Now, on the ground here maintained as to the language then prevalent in Palestine, this statement seems entirely to remove the difficulty. They "who journeyed with him" were in all probability Roman soldiers who knew nothing of Aramaic. They had felt no necessity in intercourse with the natives of the country to acquire even a smattering of the national language, so that they were now utterly unable to comprehend the meaning of the words addressed to Paul from heaven. They heard the voice which spake to him; they were conscious of listening to an articulate and definite form of speech, but being ignorant of the language which was used, they failed entirely to *understand* it. And,

\* See, for an account of these, *Alexander* on the Acts, vol. ii., p. 297; and comp. *Alford* on Acts, chap. ix. 7—a note which I cannot but deem unsatisfactory.

taking this view of the matter, we seem also to find an adequate explanation of the fact that it was *Hebrew*, and not Greek, which was made use of by our Lord on this occasion.\* The object seems to have been to speak exclusively, and, therefore, all the more impressively, to him whose conversion was then so strikingly to be effected. As it still often happens, in cases of earnest awakening to spiritual things, that the persons effectively influenced feel as if personally addressed from heaven, and others who hear the very same words are as little moved by them as if they were spoken in a foreign language, so now Paul *alone* both *heard* the voice and *understood* it, while those round about him simply listened to it with the outward ear, without having any effect produced by it on their understandings or their hearts. They had been accustomed to hold intercourse with Paul and other Jews by means of Greek ; and now when the peculiar language of the country was used, they were altogether at a loss to conceive its meaning. The apparent contradiction between the two statements seems in this way only to receive a satisfactory explanation ; † and another illustration is furnished of the truth of our proposition—that Greek was then the language habitually employed for all public purposes by the Jews of Palestine.

It only remains to be noticed, further, that it fits in well with our conclusion, when we find the exalted

\* The objection to our views, based upon this fact, will be found considered in the following chapter.

† If it be supposed that Paul's companions were not Gentiles but native Jews, the difficulty involved in the narrative appears to me absolutely insuperable.

Saviour represented in the book of the Revelation as making use emblematically of the letters of the *Greek* alphabet. In three several passages of that book, (chap. i. 8, xxi. 6, xxii. 13,) the expression is used by our Lord, "I am Alpha and Omega, (*A καὶ Ω,*) the beginning and the end, the first and the last." Now, there is certainly nothing impossible in the supposition that the corresponding *Hebrew* form of this figurative description was, in point of fact, made use of by Christ; and that, as Grotius has observed, "Joannes eam locutionem aptavit ad alphabetum Græcum, quia ipse Græce scribebat." But it can hardly be shewn that the analogous *Hebrew* form of expression was in use among the Jews of our Saviour's day. It seems also, as Diodati has remarked,\* to have been the habit of John to insert *Hebrew* terms which were employed by those to whom he listened in these apocalyptic visions, as well as to give their *Greek* equivalents, (comp. chap. ix. 11, xvi. 16.) And it cannot, at all events, be denied, that it is more easy and natural to regard the *Greek* expression now referred to as having been actually employed by our Lord; and, as no sufficient reason can be suggested for His having adopted this form of speech, except on the supposition that *Greek* had been generally employed by Him and His disciples, we find again, in the passages under remark, an additional corroboration of the truth of the proposition already so abundantly confirmed, that He and they did, for the most part, make use of the *Greek* language.

I here close the direct proof of that position which

\* Part ii., c. 2, § 5.

I have undertaken to establish. In the next chapter, we shall have to deal with the objections often brought forward against it ; and shall find several of these, when closely examined, contributing still further to swell the evidence which has already been accumulated in its favour. But it will not, I trust, be deemed presumptuous, if I venture to assert in this place, that the thesis of this work has been established in the preceding chapters, by arguments such as no objections can materially weaken, or effectually set aside. I am not so sanguine as to hope that *all* the passages which have been referred to in the previous pages will present themselves in the same light to the reader as they have done to the writer ; or that some of them will not appear to have but little bearing on the point under consideration. But with respect to many of them, I feel warranted in humbly but confidently maintaining, that by no fair process of reasoning which leaves the genuineness of the sacred writings untouched can they be made to favour any other conclusion than that which has been deduced from them, and which is expressed in the oft-repeated proposition of this work—that *our Lord and His disciples did, for the most part, make use of* THE GREEK LANGUAGE.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS TO THE VIEW THAT GREEK WAS THE PREVALENT LANGUAGE OF PALES- TINE IN THE TIMES OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.

THERE is no proposition which does not contain a contradiction in terms but may possibly be true, and is therefore capable of being maintained with a greater or less degree of plausibility. And, on the other hand, there is no proposition which does not rest on demonstrative evidence, but will be found, in some measure, open to objections, and must, however certain in itself, be defended against them. We may expect, then, to find, on the part of those who believe that our Lord and His disciples generally made use of Hebrew, that they will have objections to offer, some of them, perhaps, at first sight very formidable, against the proposition which has been maintained in this work. I now proceed to as full an examination of these objections as can reasonably be demanded, and shall endeavour to notice, in a fair and patient spirit, all that seem to have any claim upon our consideration.

The first, and one of the most common of these objections is of a purely *à priori* character. It rests

on the alleged tenacity of vernacular language, and is usually accompanied by a statement of the special unlikelihood which is supposed to have existed in the case of the Jews, that any other tongue should have supplanted their ancient national language. I need not remind the readers of this work that I do not contend that the ancestral language of the Jews had been *supplanted* by any other in the days of Christ and His disciples, but merely that it had been superseded, for all public and literary purposes, by the general employment of Greek. Hebrew in a modified form was still, I believe, extant, and used pretty freely throughout the country ; as the Celtic language is at the present day in several parts of Scotland, where English is, nevertheless, for the most part, employed on all public occasions ; and as might be illustrated by the linguistic condition of many other modern nations. Even admitting, therefore, the full force of the objection as thus put, it is a *telum imbelle* so far as our position is concerned.

But, in truth, the general principle which this *a priori* objection involves, is one which cannot be maintained. Numerous instances might be brought forward, in addition to those formerly referred to, in which the ancient vernacular language of a country has given place, more or less entirely, to another, under the pressure of external circumstances. Time itself—by which I mean the operation of constant, but unappreciable influences—is sufficient so greatly to change the language of a country, that what was formerly a tongue understood and employed by the whole people, gradually becomes a form of speech intelligible only to the scholars or antiquaries among

them. The well-known words of Horace proclaim a universal truth—

“Ut sylvæ foliis pronos mutantur in annos,  
Prima cadunt ; ita verborum vetus interit ætas,  
Et juvenum ritu florent modo nata vigentque.”

—*Ars Poet.*, 60 seq.

Many illustrations of this statement might be given. “Polybius,” for example, “tells us (iii., 22) that the best-informed Romans could not make out without difficulty the language of the ancient treaties between Rome and Carthage. Horace admits (Ep., ii., i., 86,) that he could not understand the old Salian poems, and he hints that no one else could. Quintilian (i., 6, 40) says that the Salian priests could hardly understand their sacred hymns.”\* How different, again, both the colloquial and scholastic English of the present day, from that of Chaucer and Wycliffe ! The pages both of the poet and reformer mentioned, are now, to a great extent, almost unintelligible to ordinary readers. So is it in Scotland with the writings of the Reformation poet, Sir David Lyndsay. No one who has not made himself familiar with the Scotch of that period could peruse with any pleasure the vigorous lines of that poet, however well he might be acquainted with the Scotch of the present day. Nay, short as is the period which has elapsed since Burns wrote in the generally understood popular dialect, there are not now perhaps many Scotchmen who will not often find it necessary or useful to glance at the glossary in perusing any of the more decidedly Scottish effusions of the great national bard. “Few languages,” it has been recently said, “could be re-

\* *Max Müller's* “Lectures on Language,” p. 56.

cognised as the same, after the lapse of but a thousand years. The language of Alfred is so different from the English of the present day, that we have to study it in the same manner as we study Greek and Latin. We can read Milton and Bacon, Shakspeare and Hooker; we can make out Wycliffe and Chaucer; but when we come to the English of the thirteenth century, we can but guess its meaning, and we fail even in this with works previous to the Ormulium and Layamon. The historical changes of language may be more or less rapid, but they take place *at all times and in all countries.*" \*

And if this be the case when no special external agencies are at work, much more will it happen when a country is overrun by foreigners, and when numerous settlements of the conquerors take place among its inhabitants. It was formerly shewn how wide became, in this way, the prevalence of the Greek tongue throughout the East; and the same causes have operated since, though never in so striking a degree, to secure the ascendancy of other languages. The numerous countries in which French and English have obtained pre-eminence at the present day, to the entire exclusion, or comparative depression, of the vernacular dialects, are amply sufficient to prove that the fundamental principle on which the *à priori* objection rests is not one which can, as a general truth, be successfully defended.

Nor, again, can it be maintained that the case of the Jews formed a special exception to what has been observed in other countries. So far from this being the case, we know beyond a doubt, that, for centuries before the birth of Christ, their native Hebrew had been en-

\* *Max Müller's* "Lectures on Language," p. 33, et seq.



tirely supplanted, as the popular language, by that which is generally known as the Aramæan or Syro-Chaldaic dialect. It is true, indeed, that the later language was radically connected with the earlier, so that its adoption by the people of Palestine did not amount to such an entire linguistic revolution as has taken place in other cases. But this makes little difference in a practical point of view. The essential fact is, that their former national language had been wholly superseded. It is universally admitted that the ancient biblical Hebrew, whatever its affinities to the kind of *patois* employed in familiar intercourse among the Jews of our Saviour's day, had become a dead language, and was totally unintelligible to the people. Only a few scholars continued to study and understand it at the commencement of the Christian era; and the sacred literary treasures which it contained were, until interpreted, as much sealed up to the common people, as if they had been written in the Latin or Egyptian languages.\*

I cannot, then, admit the truth of the principle involved in the *à priori* objection, either as considered generally, or in its special application to the nation of the Jews. But even granting its theoretic soundness, it would still remain subject, in every case, to the test of actual facts. Supposing it to be true that there

\* See above, Chap. IV.; and I may here add the opinion of *Hengstenberg* with respect to the point in question. "If we should grant," he says, "to the Hebrew language a greater prevalence in the times immediately succeeding the captivity than we are able to assign to it, in any case it is certain, that in the time of the Maccabees it was quite superseded in common use among the people, and was only an object of learned acquisition."—*Authenticity of the Book of Daniel*, Clark's For. Theol. Lib., p. 244.

were few or no other cases in which a national language had died out, or been superseded by a different dialect ; and supposing it also true that there were special causes in existence which seemed likely to prevent this from taking place among the Jews, the question could not yet be regarded as settled. In every case, the appeal must, after all, be made to facts. The decisive question is, Was it, or was it not, the case, that, in our Saviour's days, the Greek language had obtained prevalence in Palestine ? It is only if no positive evidence exists, to which reference may be made on this question, that we can allow the *à priori* principle any weight in determining our judgment. All mere presumptive reasoning must yield in the face of actual proof. Its very strongest conclusions vanish at once when shewn inconsistent with even the smallest amount of incontrovertible fact. And therefore, while far from acknowledging the validity of the objection now under consideration in the principle which it involves, I may be content simply to point to the evidence already brought forward to demonstrate its inapplicability in the special case which has engaged our attention in this work. Many and varied proofs have been adduced to shew that Greek *was* in reality the reigning language of Palestine in the time of our Saviour. And unless these proofs can be repelled, the result to which they lead remains totally unaffected by any *à priori* considerations. They present the stubborn resistance ever offered by *facts* to all mere *theories*, however plausible ; and if they cannot be questioned or set aside, they demand, with the imperial authority of truth, to be accepted in all their length and breadth, and with all their manifest and legitimate conclusions.

It has been necessary to notice thus particularly the *à priori* objection to the views which I have advocated, because it is in reality a very favourite weapon with a certain class of writers on the opposite side of this question. Such arguments as the following are continually employed :—"We cannot *conceive* that Greek was employed by our Saviour and His disciples"—"The Jews were too tenacious of all that was national and peculiar ever to have parted with their ancestral language"—"How can we doubt that Hebrew was the dialect which our Lord and His contemporaries made use of?"\* &c. Now, I crave leave to retire from this ground altogether; not from any fear of being beaten on it, but because it is not the ground on which the controversy can ever be decided. The question is purely one of *fact*; and nothing else can properly be allowed any weight in settling it. Let the opponents

\* I may quote a single specimen of this mode of argument from among the reviews of my former work. In a friendly enough notice of it which appeared in the *Literary Churchman*, (Nov. 1, 1859, p. 393,) we read as follows :—"That our Saviour may possibly have delivered *some* of His recorded sayings in Greek, or even in Latin, *who* would be so rash as to venture to deny? But that He spoke Greek habitually—for example, to the widow of Nain, to the blind men of Jericho, to the woman of Canaan, to the multitudes who heard many of His parables, and witnessed many of His miracles—this, we should really think, is what no learned and thoughtful person could gravely maintain, or seriously attempt to prove, for an instant. *Why* doubt that He spoke τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ αὐτῶν? and that their own dialect was the same in which 'the field of blood' was called 'Aceldama?'" As was remarked in the First Chapter, it is easy in this way to excite a powerful prejudice against the views which I have ventured to maintain. But I simply appeal to facts. If I have *proved* in the preceding pages that even the populace (ὄχλος) of the Jews, while using their Hebrew *patois* in familiar intercourse, were yet thoroughly familiar with Greek, such objections as the above will cause but little concern. A very sufficient answer, I believe, is given to the question, "*Why* doubt that Christ spoke in Hebrew?" when we can shew that He *did not*.

of our views leave the shadowy realm of presumptive reasoning altogether ; and let us meet on the substantial ground of actual evidence, where alone the contest can find issue, and where the irresistible testimony of truth may be proved to belong either to the one side or the other.

It is, then, with a feeling of satisfaction that I proceed to a consideration of those *à posteriori* arguments by which the conclusions set forth in this work are sought to be invalidated. Many of these arguments bear only against the opinion that Hebrew, in the form of Syro-Chaldaic, was not commonly employed for *any* purpose by the Jews of our Saviour's day, and present, therefore, no really hostile aspect to the views maintained in this work. It is idle to prove that Aramaic was *frequently* used by the contemporaries of Christ and His disciples. The evidence of that fact is, I believe, abundant and conclusive. But when admitted to the fullest extent, it by no means excludes the proposition of this work. As the doctrine of the true divinity of our Redeemer is not in the least impugned by the amplest evidence that He was also possessed of manhood ; or, as the doctrine of the free agency of man is not necessarily set aside by the most cogent reasoning in favour of the absolute supremacy of the Godhead ; so the conclusion which has been reached in this work, as to the general employment of Greek for all public purposes by the Jews of Palestine in the time of Christ, is not in the smallest degree inconsistent with evidence which shews that they also very frequently made use of Hebrew. Yet many have argued as if this were the case. They do not conceive of any such correlation having existed between the



two languages as has been set forth in this work ; and hence we often meet with passages like the following against the view which I have maintained as to the *prevalence* of the Greek language in Palestine :—

“When Marsyas, the freedman of Herod Agrippa, brought him the news of Tiberius’s death, he said to him in the *Hebrew tongue*, ‘The Lion is dead,’ (*Jos.*, *Antiq.*, xviii. 6, 10.) In another place, (*Antiq.*, xx. 3, 4,) Josephus tells us that Izates, king of the Adiabenes, who had embraced Judaism, sent five of his children to learn the vernacular language of Judæa, and to be instructed in the law at Jerusalem. In like manner, (*Bell.*, iv. 1, 5,) the Jews in Gamala, it is manifestly implied, were speaking a language akin to Syriac, though their own tongue, when they were overheard by some Syrian soldiers of Vespasian’s army. The Jews, too, stationed on the towers of Jerusalem, to watch the discharge of the Roman ballistæ, are said to have warned the defendants of the approach of the stones, by crying out in their native tongue, *ὁ ἰὸς ἔρχεται*, (*Bell.*, v. 6, 3.) It was in their native tongue that Josephus, by command of Titus, addressed to the besieged the two harangues recorded in *Bell.*, v. 9, 2, 3, &c., and vi. 6, 1 ; and *Contra Apionem*, i. 9, the deserters or prisoners from among the Jews, at the time of the siege, must have spoken Hebrew, if, as he tells us, he alone understood what they said.” \*

With the exception of the occasions referred to in the last sentence of this paragraph, and which will be specially noticed afterwards, there is not one of the testimonies here cited that calls for the least consideration. I willingly admit, as has all along been evident,

\* *Greswell’s* “Harmony of the Gospels,” iii., 347.

that the Jews of that period were, generally speaking, *δίγλωττοι* ; and I entertain no doubt that, as in the instances quoted above, they often found it both convenient and agreeable to employ their national language. But the admission of this fact does not in any way controvert the thesis of this work. Both truths rest on their own appropriate evidence ; and the many proofs which may be brought forward to shew that the Jews were then acquainted with Hebrew, and often made use of it, stand in perfect harmony with the parallel proofs which have been adduced to evince that they were equally well acquainted with Greek, and generally employed it for all public and literary purposes.

There are, however, some passages contained in Josephus, the rabbinical writers, and the New Testament, which are thought to run directly counter to our proposition. They are deemed altogether inconsistent with the belief that Greek was so commonly known, or so generally employed, in Palestine, as I have maintained ; and are supposed to prove that that language could *not* have been usually employed by our Lord and His disciples. It is necessary, therefore, more particularly to examine them ; and, if the truth has already been reached, no fear need be felt for the result. Many, indeed, of the fancied objections will be found, as might be expected, when fully examined, not only to harmonise perfectly with the proposition of this work, but still more clearly to illustrate and establish it. I shall begin by a consideration of some statements which occur in the writings of Josephus.

The first passage calling for remark is found in the preface to his history of the Jewish war, and may be

rendered in English as follows:—"I have devoted myself to the task of translating, for the sake of those who live under the government of the Romans, the narrative which I formerly composed in our national language, and transmitted to the Barbarians of the interior."\* The exact meaning of this passage has been disputed. A question has arisen as to the persons intended by the appellation τοῖς ἄνω βαρβάροις. But it is now generally agreed on both sides, that Josephus here refers to the "mediterraneis barbaris"—that is, the Jews of Babylon, Parthia, Arabia, and those beyond the Euphrates. The historian himself seems to make his meaning plain in the following section, when he declares again, that the object which he had in view in re-writing his history was that the Greeks and Romans, as well as "the Parthians, the Babylonians, the furthest Arabians, and the Jews beyond the Euphrates," might have access to a true narrative of the events. And thus, as appears to me, little difficulty is left with respect to the meaning of the antithetical clause, τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίαν. Diodati restricts the meaning of these words to the *Jews* living under the sovereignty of Rome—that is, the Jews of Palestine. Others, on the contrary, think that the words *exclude all Jews*,† and refer only to the inhabitants of Greece, and such others in the Roman empire as were acquainted with the Greek language. In my humble judgment, both views miss the natural import of the words. Josephus, in composing his history in Greek, intended it for the use *generally* of those who lived *under the govern-*

\* "Προϋέμην ἐγὼ τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίαν, Ἑλλάδι γλώσση μεταβαλὼν, ἃ τοῖς ἄνω βαρβάροις τῇ πατρίῳ συντάξας ἀνέπεμψα πρῶτον, ἀφηγήσασθαι."

† Davidson's "Introduction," i., 428.

*ment of the Romans*—manifestly therefore, though not exclusively, for his brethren in Palestine. The same thing appears from his not enumerating the Jews of Palestine among those for whom the *Hebrew* edition of his narrative was designed; and thus, in full accordance with the views maintained in this work, we are led to infer from the passage in question, that a history intended for the natives of Palestine, among others, would naturally be composed in the Greek language.

There are two other passages generally quoted from Josephus, (*Antiq.*, *Procem*, 2, and *Antiq.*, xx. 11, 2,) in the former of which he speaks of the Greek in which he wrote his “*Antiquities*” as a *ξένη καὶ ἀλλοδαπή διάλεκτος*; and in the latter, tells us that he had devoted himself to the study of Greek learning, but had not been able to acquire a correct pronounciation, on account of the habit which prevailed in his native country.\* These passages have been much insisted on by those who deny the prevalence of Greek in Palestine. But the whole difficulty which they seem to present, vanishes when we take into account the object which Josephus had professedly in view. It was not his purpose merely to write in Greek, but, as far as possible, in *pure and classical Greek*.\* And it is in perfect consistency with the

\* “Τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν δὲ γραμμάτων ἐσπούδασα μετασχεῖν, τὴν γραμματικὴν ἐμπειρίαν ἀναλαβὼν, τὴν δὲ περὶ τὴν προφορὰν ἀκρίβειαν πατήριος ἐκώλυσε συνήθεια.” It appears to me evident that the *πάτριος συνήθεια* here mentioned refers to the use of the *Greek*, and not the *Hebrew* language.

† “Josephus imitates, with great care and considerable success, the writers of pure Greek, especially *Polybius*, both in single words and in the turn of his sentences; intermixing but few Hebraisms, and therein, as he himself says, departing from the custom of his fellow-countrymen.”—*Ernesti's Institutes*, (Clark's Cabinet Library,) vol. ii., 184.



position which I uphold as to the linguistic condition of Palestine at the time, that he should have felt great difficulty in accomplishing this purpose. His *πάτριος συνήθεια* greatly hindered it. The Hebraistic Greek, to which he was accustomed, might almost have been reckoned a different language from that employed by the classical historians. It was, therefore, an onerous task which Josephus undertook, when he engaged to write an account of the institutions of his country on the model of native Greek writers ; and we wonder not that he required all the assistance he could procure in this undertaking, and excused the delay which had taken place in the publication of his work by a statement of the difficulty which he had experienced in composing it.\*

Other passages in the writings of Josephus which are frequently referred to, are those (Wars, v. 9, 2 ; vi. 2, 1,) in which he speaks of himself as having, by the command of Titus, addressed his besieged countrymen *τῇ πατρίῳ γλώσσῃ* and *Ἑβραΐζων*. Diodati has tried to maintain that these expressions may be so interpreted as to imply that, on the occasions mentioned, Josephus spoke in *Greek*. But this is to do violence to the plain import of the words. They manifestly acquaint us with the fact that Josephus then made use of Hebrew. And, however fatal such an admission might be to the theory of Diodati, it is not in the least opposed to that which I have maintained. Nothing could have been more natural in the circum-

\* In illustration of the above passages from Josephus, I may observe that it is not uncommon to find Scottish writers of the last century speaking in their prefaces of the pains which they had taken, often, as was felt, with but partial success, to write in correct and classical English.

stances in which the Jews were now placed, than that they should have fallen back, as much as possible, on the employment of their national language. But had not Greek formerly been generally current among them, there seems little reason why Josephus should have mentioned that he *now* spoke to them in Hebrew. And the very fact that he so particularly notices this, seems to indicate that another language might even yet have been employed. There were, however, urgent reasons why their national tongue should now be adopted by any one who wished to obtain a favourable hearing from them. Their state was now very different from what it had been during the comparatively peaceful period which our Lord spent upon the earth. A tremendous outburst of national fury had taken place. They were in arms against their Roman invaders, and we know that the greatest fanaticism then prevailed among them. There was a violent recoil from all that savoured of Gentilism, and this feeling would be sure to display itself in regard to language as in other particulars. In fact, as was formerly mentioned, we find a statement in the Mischna to the effect, that the employment of Greek for certain purposes was formally prohibited during the war with Titus ;\* so that we have no difficulty in understanding why, on the occasions referred to, Josephus should have made use of the Hebrew language.†

\* Mischna, Gitt., c. ix., 8 ; *Surenhusius*, iii., 304.

† I may observe, that the objection derived from the above-mentioned passages is more than parried by the following very acute remarks of Prof. Hug in reference to another passage of Josephus, (*Wars*, vi., 6, 2 :) — “ When the revoltors, in the last decisive moments, became apparently more submissive, they requested a conference with Titus. He had never yet appeared in person in any negotia-

There is, however, one passage in the works of this writer, which, if it is to be accepted in the sense which Greswell and others put upon it, appears, I confess, altogether inexplicable. I refer to the statement which Josephus makes, (Cont. Ap., i., 9,) when, insisting on the peculiar advantages which he had enjoyed for becoming accurately acquainted with the events of the Jewish war, he declares that “being an eye-witness of what occurred in the Roman camp, he wrote it down carefully, and was the *only person who understood*—*συνίην*—the reports brought by the deserters from the city.” Neither Hug nor Diodati alludes to this passage, nor is it referred to by many of the most strenuous opponents of their views, so that we may suppose little importance is attached to it on either side. And in reply to those who do adduce it in opposition to our argument, it may simply be remarked that, if accepted in the sense which they put upon the words, it proves by far too much, and there-

tion. He approached, ordered a cessation of hostilities on the part of the Romans, had an interpreter at his side—*ὅπερ ἦν τεκμήριον τοῦ κρατεῖν*, as Josephus adds—and himself commenced the conference. Here he spoke through an interpreter. Was this interpreter, then, employed to translate the words of Titus into *Hebrew*? For that office he would no doubt have preferred Josephus himself. But it was not he; if it had been, he would have mentioned it, for he never forgets himself in his history. Neither was the interpreter present to address the Jews in *Hebrew*, *πατρίῳ γλώσσῃ*, for Josephus would have mentioned it. For what purpose, then, it will be asked, was the interpreter needed? The words of the historian, rightly understood, afford an explanation. The emperor spoke *ex majestate imperii*,—i.e., in *Latin*, according to the old Roman custom,” . . . and “the interpreter translated his words into a more intelligible language, but, as we have inferred from the usual custom of Josephus, not into *Hebrew*. What language, then, could it have been (but Greek?) Moreover, in confirmation, Titus is praised (*Suidas*, v.) for having made use of the *Latin* language in state affairs, and the Greek in his literary recreations.”—*Hug's Introd.*, ii., § 10.

fore proves nothing. Josephus is supposed to affirm that, of all in the Roman camp, he was the *only one* who understood Hebrew, or who, knowing both that language and the Greek, was capable of acting as interpreter between the Jewish deserters and the Romans. But this is in direct contradiction to numerous accounts contained in his own writings, which imply that there were many besides himself, then in the camp of Titus, who were acquainted with the common Hebrew of the country, as well as the no less common Greek.\* Besides, it is certain from many passages, as was before shewn, that the Jews and Romans during the siege communicated directly with one another.† It is plain, then, that the only interpretation of this passage, which would prove inconsistent with the views of this work, is one that cannot be maintained. If I may venture a suggestion regarding it, I would be inclined to take *συνίην* not in the sense of *understood*, but *became acquainted with*, a meaning which the word might possibly bear. If this explanation of the difficulty be not accepted, I see no other resource than perhaps the most natural one of all—that of regarding the statement as one of the many exaggerations by which, in the course of his writings, Josephus seeks to magnify his own importance.

We find nothing, then, in the works of the Jewish historian, that is at all opposed to the views already established; but not a little, as was formerly shewn, which tends to confirm them. There can be no doubt that he styles the Hebrew *πάτριος γλώσση*, just as a

\* See, *e.g.*, Wars, iv., 1, 5; v., 13, 7, &c.

† Wars, vi., 2, 10; and see above, p. 51.



native of Lystra would doubtless have done with respect to the language of Lycaonia. Yet, as the men of Lystra thoroughly understood Greek, and habitually employed it in public intercourse, so we have found abundant reason to believe it generally was (until the spirit of fanaticism was excited during the siege of Jerusalem) with the inhabitants of Palestine.

It is next contended that there is no evidence of the Septuagint translation having ever been used in the synagogues of Judæa, as might have been expected if the Greek language prevailed in that country. This objection has been strongly pressed by many learned writers, and in a tone of triumph which seems to indicate that it is deemed unanswerable. Nevertheless, as humbly appears to me, it is an objection which may not only be shewn to be baseless, but which, when examined, resolves itself into another confirmation of the views maintained in this work.

What then, I would ask with great deference, is the *nature* of the evidence demanded on the point in question? Is it no evidence that we find the passages quoted by our Lord in the synagogues agreeing almost *verbatim* with the version of the LXX.?<sup>\*</sup> Is it no evidence that we learn from the Gospels throughout, that the ancient Scriptures were read in the synagogues of Palestine, in a language well understood by the people; and are at the same time sure that the biblical Hebrew was then totally unintelligible to the most of them; while we have no satisfactory proof that any written version of the Old Testament then existed, except that of the LXX.? Is it no evidence that we

\* See Luke iv. 16-20; and John vi. 26-65.

find the earliest fathers of the Church, who lived in times bordering on those of the apostles, unanimously speaking of the Septuagint as in habitual use among all the Jews ; and that it is not till we come down to Jerome that we find any doubts suggested as to that version having been employed by our Lord and His apostles ? To my mind every available source of evidence, which is worth anything, points to the conclusion that the Greek translation of the Old Testament Scriptures was then regularly used in the synagogues of Palestine. But before proceeding to state more fully my reasons for holding this opinion, it is necessary to notice the opposite reasons which have been thought by many effectually to debar us from coming to any such conclusion.

We are told that the Jews of Palestine *despised*\* their Greek-speaking brethren, and that they carefully shrunk from the use of any other than the Hebrew text in their synagogues ; that it was only as a matter of indulgence the Greek version was permitted to be used by the Hellenists, and that the stricter Jews looked upon its employment as little less than a profanation ; with other statements of the same sort. One critic repeats after another such declarations as have been quoted, while some, by attempting to combine these with what I humbly reckon the truth on the subject, render their account of the whole matter a strange mass of inconsistency and error.†

\* See, *e.g.*, *Biscoe* on the Acts, 2d edit., p. 83, for a statement to this effect ; and his words have been adopted by many subsequent writers.

† Who, *e.g.*, could form any clear and definite judgment on the question from the following sentences of the learned German critic *Fritzsche* ? After observing that Josephus is principally, and Philo entirely, dependent on the LXX. for their quotations from the Old

The whole confusion and inaccuracy have arisen from too readily transferring some statements of Jewish writers, who lived centuries after the commencement of our era, to the days of our Lord and His apostles. Great injury has, I believe, been done to the interpretation of the New Testament by the undue importance which Vitranga, Lightfoot, and their followers have attached to the statements of the Talmud. They have applied passages which reflect the feelings and opinions of a much later age, to the epoch of our Lord and His disciples, and have thus been betrayed into some very serious errors. Many indeed of the delusions, which were once accepted on Talmudical authority, have now passed entirely away. The fable for instance which was formerly current, as to the annual fast held by the Jews on account of the formation of the version of the LXX., is now rated at its proper value.\* And many eminent scholars are

Testament, he adds :—" Anders die palästinischen und strengern Juden. Zwar dass auch bei solchen sie in Synagogen, wenn schon nicht ohne Widerspruch, gebraucht wurde, erhellt deutlich aus jer. T. Megilla 16, *Justinian's* Nov. 146, allein es war dies nur ein nothgedrungenes Zugeständniss. Auf ihrem Standpunkte konnten sie in der Uebers. nur Profanation, in ihrem gottesdienstlichen Gebrauche nur Gefahr für das Judenthum erblicken ; dazu stellten sich ja auch wichtige Differenzen vom Grundtexte heraus und bald trat der Conflict mit den Christen hinzu, vgl. Justin M., Dial. c. Tryph. 68, 71. So erscheint nach dem Sinne dieser Richtung, in der jüdischen Sage der Tag der Uebers. als ein Unglückstag wie der, wo das goldne Kalb gemacht wurde (Tract. Sopher. 1) von welchem am 3 Tage Finsterniss über die Welt kam, (Meg. Taquith, f. 50. c. 2.) Dennoch hat die Vorstellung von ihrer Inspiration in den Talmud Eingang gefunden."—*Hertzog's Real-Encyc.*, Art. Alexand. Uebers. I attach very little importance in the question under consideration to the edict of Justinian here mentioned, and of which so much has been made. It belongs to an age by far too late (A.D. 541) to throw any light upon the point in controversy. Comp. *Zunz*, "Vorträge," p. 10.

\* Compare, on such points, the remarks of *Hodius* in his learned work "De Bibliorum Textibus Originalibus."

now very far from joining in the opinion that the Jews of Palestine despised or condemned the use of the Greek language. Zunz, resting on the best and earliest Rabbinical authorities, declares, on the contrary, that they held Greek in the highest esteem.\* In this opinion he is joined by the learned Jewish writer Frankel, who affirms that even in the Talmud itself the Septuagint is habitually referred to in terms of the greatest respect.† There are indeed some passages to be met with which speak with contempt and bitterness of the Greek language and literature. But these are in clear opposition to other statements of the Rabbinical writers.‡ We find, in fact, as is noticed by Fritzsche, in the passage just quoted below, that they even attributed *Divine inspiration* to the Greek version of the Old Testament ; and this fact of itself seems to suggest that, instead of being undervalued, it was rather overestimated, and might accordingly have been employed for the most sacred purposes.

\* "Die Sprache von Hellas war selbst in das aramäische und hebräische eingedrungen, und stand bei den jüdischen Weisen Palästina's in hohem Ansehen."—*Vorträge*, &c., p. 10.

† "In Talmud selbst wird, wie § 4 erwähnt, der Septuaginta nur ehrenvoll gedacht."—*Frankel's Vorstudien zu der Septuaginta*, p. 61. We need not dispute with this writer whether or not the ancient Jews ever esteemed the version of the LXX. as *canonical*.

‡ The inconsistency observable on this point in the statements of the Talmudists was pointed out by *Paulus* in a work (which I know only from a French review of it in *Millin's "Magasin Encyclopédique,"* 1805) entitled, "*Verosimilia de Judæis Palæstinensibus, Jesu atque etiam Apostolis non Aramæa dialecto solâ, sed Græcâ quoque Aramæizante locutis.*" Jenæ, 1803. The reviewer says, (p. 131,) "Notre auteur discute assez longuement ces autorités ; il fait voir que ces prohibitions ont pour objet la philosophie des Grecs, et non leur langue, et oppose à ces passages d'autres citations des Talmuds, qui semblent, au contraire, prouver l'usage de la langue Grecque parmi les Juifs de la Palestine, et légitimité reconnue de l'étude de cette langue." Comp. *Meuschen*, "*Nov. Test. ex Talmude Illustratum*," pp. 9, 10.



But, as was before remarked, I do not attach much importance to the statements made by even the most trustworthy of these Jewish writers. In my humble judgment, they have been greatly overrated as authorities on many points of New Testament criticism. Lightfoot himself bears witness to the teeming absurdities of their writings, (*nugis scatent*;) and the least acquaintance with them is sufficient to verify the statement; so that they must be used with great caution, merely as illustrative of the Judaic usages referred to in the New Testament;\* and, as *independent* sources of information with respect to the state of matters existing in our Saviour's day, they can hardly be regarded as possessed of any authority whatever.

The fact is, that in this special question respecting the use which was made of the Septuagint by the Jews of Palestine in our Lord's time, as in other similar inquiries, our only certain information is to be derived from the New Testament itself. And, when we look into it with an unprejudiced eye, there seems little possibility of hesitation as to the conclusion to be formed. We see our Lord entering the synagogue at Nazareth and having a book put into His hands, from which He reads in the hearing of the people. In what language, then, was that book composed? This question, if it can be answered, is decisive of the point under discussion. Nor does there seem much difficulty in answering it. We know, beyond all dispute,

\* *Winer* well remarks, R.W.B., Art. Synagogen,—“Ueberhaupt darf nicht Alles, was in der Gemara und bei Rabbin. von Synag. berichtet wird, auf die im Zeitalter Jesu gewöhnlichen übergetragen werden.” Comp. *Ernesti* (Institutes, ii., 308) on the exaggerated importance which has been attached by Vitringa to the later Jewish writings.

that the ancient Hebrew could not have been the language of the book ; for, as was formerly shewn, that was then altogether unintelligible to the people. The ground is narrowed, then, to the old question between the Septuagint translation, which was certainly then in existence, and a written Chaldee paraphrase which is summoned into being for the occasion. One should imagine that if there is anything required to decide between these competing claims, enough is found in the fact that no proof can be brought from the New Testament that even an *oral* Chaldee paraphrase was then usually given in the synagogues of Palestine,\* and that the passage in question is preserved by the Evangelist in almost the exact words of the LXX. version.

And then, if we look at the statements of the early Christian writers, we find that they, with the greatest unanimity, corroborate this conclusion. Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and Tertullian all contain statements which clearly testify to the habitual use of the version of the LXX. among the Jews.† It was not till the time of Jerome that the idea began to spread that any other form of the ancient Scriptures was generally employed

\* Even *Vitringa*, while almost pathetically expressing his regret that any scholar should ever have believed the Greek version to have been used in the synagogues, ("mirandum et dolendum," p. 954,) and after remarking that, on the Hebrew becoming a dead language, it was necessary that there should always be some one in the public religious assemblies of the Jews, "qui Scripturam prælectam in vernaculum idioma transferret," is constrained to add, "Hujus vero sacri ritus interpretationis lectæ Scripturæ nulla, quod sciam, exerta mentio occurrit in scriptis novi fœderis."—*Vitringa, De Synagogâ Vetere*, pp. 1015, 1021.

† These testimonies are collected and considered by *Archdeacon Hody* in the work above mentioned, p. 224, et seq.

by our Lord and His disciples.\* In short, as there is nothing more than assertions to be found that the Old Testament scriptures existed in any other form among the Jews of our Saviour's day than in the Hebrew original and the Greek translation, and as they certainly were not read in the synagogues by our Lord and His contemporaries only in a dead language, we necessarily conclude, in full accordance with the impression derived from the earliest Christian and Jewish writers, and, above all, from the records contained in the New Testament, that the Greek version of the Old Testament *was*, in our Saviour's time, regularly employed in the synagogues of Palestine.†

The existence of the Targums of Onkelos and

\* The untenable character of the assertions of Jerome on this point, and the inconsistencies into which he is betrayed, are well exposed by *Father Simon*, "Critical History of the New Test.," chap. xx. Comp., also, *Hody*, ut sup., p. 260.

† Very probably this conclusion will still be strongly controverted. But if so, let it be disproved by some better arguments than those derived from the pages of late Talmudical writers. I am glad to find some shelter from attack on this point under the authority of writers whose erudition must be universally respected. *Is. Vossius* declares, in language somewhat stronger than I think it necessary to employ, "Usque ad tempora Aquilæ nulla alia lecta fuit Scriptura in omnibus Judæorum synagogis præter illam LXX. interpretum."—*De Sibyllinis Oraculis*, cap. xiv. The late *Prof. Blunt* writes as follows:—"When Jesus 'stood up for to read,' and the book of the prophet Isaiah was given Him, it was the *Septuagint translation*. In St Stephen's speech before the Jewish council, there are not less than twenty-eight distinct quotations from that version. In the Epistle of James to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, there is not a single quotation which is not taken from the Septuagint. The Epistle to the Hebrews has been said, as far as language goes, to be a kind of mosaic, composed of bits and fragments of the Septuagint."—*History of the Christian Church*, p. 135. The very learned *Walton* is led, with a curious admixture of both truth and error, to make the supposition, "Christum Dominum in Synagoga Nazarethena textum Jesaiæ ex translatione Græca prælegisse, et prælectum in Syriacum idioma convertisse."

Jonathan, formerly described, has also been appealed to as an objection against the prevalence of the Greek language in Palestine. But nothing whatever can be founded on these ancient Jewish paraphrases of the Old Testament. As above remarked, their date is altogether uncertain, and the strong probability is that they are at least somewhat later than the age of our Saviour.\* Besides, it is almost certain that they are of Babylonian, and not Palestinian, origin. Some indeed have endeavoured to maintain the contrary, but, so far as I can judge, without success.† The general opinion of scholars is that they were composed in Babylonia some time after the destruction of Jerusalem. For my own part, I should date their origin in one of the generations immediately succeeding that event, both on account of internal evidence, and because we know that Babylon then became more than ever the head-quarters of the Judæo-Chaldæan language and literature.‡

Advancing now to a consideration of the objections

\* The supposition made by many, and among others by Zunz, that Targums of most of the sacred books existed at a much earlier date than that generally assigned to the only extant works of the kind, was formerly shewn to be without foundation. (See above, Chap. IV.) *Beelen* observes on this point:—"Plurimorum sacræ Scripturæ librorum Chaldaicas paraphrases scripto exaratas tempore Machabæorum jam extitisse sentit Zunz; qui tamen, ut suam sententiam confirmet nullum satis firmum affert argumentum."—*Chrestomathia Rubbinica et Chaldaica, Notæ in Select. Targ.*, p. 91.

† *Winer* has sought to controvert the prevailing opinion on this point in his work "De Onkeloso ejusque Paraphrasi Chaldaicâ," § 1, Lips., 1820.

‡ "Après la destruction de Jerusalem, Babylon devint plus que jamais le centre du Judaïsme, et le Chaldéen continua d'être la langue vulgaire des Juifs dispersés dans tout l'Orient."—*Rénan, Histoire des Langues Sémitiques*, p. 225.



derived from the New Testament itself, I shall notice, in the first place, those Aramaic words and phrases which occasionally present themselves, and on the occurrence of which not a little is often based. In fact, the few Hebrew words which are found in our Lord's discourses, have been frequently referred to as decisive of the whole question at issue.\* The fallacy involved in such a mode of argument was formerly pointed out. It was remarked that nothing could be more natural than that such terms should from time to time occur, if the relation of the two languages were such as is here supposed. It was also shewn how difficult it is to account for the retention of these few words in their original form, on the hypothesis that the language employed by our Lord and His disciples has, for the most part, been translated.† Thus far, in reference to the objection generally considered. Instead of proving hostile to our views, it tends rather to support them; and instead of aiding opponents, it serves only to embarrass and confute them.

But there is one such Aramaic term which demands special notice, as it is particularly relied on by those who uphold the prevalence of Hebrew. I refer to the word *Aceldama*, which occurs in the narrative contained in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. We read, (ver. 15–22.) “And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty,) Men and brethren, this scripture must needs

\* Thus—“That our Lord did *not* habitually talk Greek, we really think is sufficiently established by His numerous (*sic!*) recorded sayings *in the language of Palestine*.”—*Literary Churchman*, Nov. 1, 1859, p. 393.

† See above, Chap. III.

have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity ; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem ; insomuch as that field is called, in their proper tongue, *Aceldama*, that is to say, *The field of blood*. For it is written in the book of Psalms, *Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein : and, his bishopric let another take*. Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.”\*

Now, it is argued that in this passage “a peculiar dialect or tongue is said to characterise Jerusalem, and consequently the country of which it was the capital. The term which Luke adduces from this dialect is *Aramæan*, shewing the prevalent language.”† But there is more to be said on this passage than most of those who build such an argument upon it seem to imagine. It is necessary to inquire first of all, *whose* are the words in the 19th verse, to which so much importance is attached. Those who argue from them as

\* I have quoted this passage in full because it is important, as will immediately appear, that the reader should have the disputed verses before him, with the connexion in which they occur. The authorised English version has been used as sufficiently accurate for our present purpose.

† *Davidson's* “*Introd. to the New Test.*,” i., 40.

to the prevalence of Hebrew in Palestine, maintain, as a matter of course, that they are an interpolation of St Luke's, in the speech of the apostle here reported. This is perhaps a possible, but will, I think, be admitted by every reader to be a somewhat unnatural view to take of them. Peter is formally introduced as speaking, and we naturally conceive that all included within the limits of the speech was really uttered by the apostle. It seems a very awkward supposition, and one quite at variance with the orderly character of Luke's narration, that, without a hint to that effect, he should break the thread of the apostle's address by some explanatory statements of his own. Moreover, the whole style and connexion of the passage are against the idea of such interpolation. The compound connective particle *μὲν οὖν* in ver. 18, clearly forbids such a supposition with respect to that verse.\* And if not ver. 18, neither can ver. 19 be regarded as a note inserted by the historian; for, as must be evident to every one, the two verses are inseparably connected together. This is admitted by most modern critics; and indeed, but for the prepossessions which exist respecting the language of Palestine at the time, it seems scarcely credible that, in opposition to the whole tenor of the narrative, any one would ever have thought of discovering a comment of St Luke's in the very heart of a speech purporting to have been delivered by St Peter.

Assuming, then, as everything warrants us in doing,

\* "This verse *cannot be regarded as inserted by Luke*; for (1.) The place of its insertion would be most unnatural for a historical notice; (2.) The *μὲν οὖν* forbids the supposition; (3.) The whole style of the verse is rhetorical, and not narrative."—*Alford*, in loc.; so *Dr Alexander*, and most recent critics.

that the disputed verse, or verses, formed part of the address of the apostle, let us see how, in this point of view, the statements made bear upon the question of language in Palestine: "It became known," says Peter, "to all the dwellers in Jerusalem, so that the field is called in their proper tongue, *Aceldama*, that is to say, The field of blood." We cannot hear these words falling from the lips of the apostle without immediately drawing some inferences from them, which, instead of being adverse, are eminently favourable to our proposition. They clearly imply (1.) that St Peter was at the time *speaking in Greek*. The contrast which he suggests between the language which he was then employing, and what he calls the *proper*, or peculiar tongue of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, manifestly proves that this was the case. Some, indeed, have imagined that he now referred to an Aramaic dialect prevailing at Jerusalem, as distinct from that of Galilee. But several reasons combine to shew that this opinion is incorrect. The compound term *Aceldama* which he quoted, is composed of two common Aramaic words (אַקֶלְדָּמָא), which must have been equally well known to all speaking the language. And considering the mere difference of pronunciation which is believed to have formed the chief distinction between the dialect of the capital and that of the provinces, it seems impossible to imagine that, had Peter alluded only to this, he would have referred to it so pointedly as he does in this passage. The obvious conclusion, then, is, that it was simply to the *Aramaic* as such that the apostle directed the thoughts of his hearers, when, referring to the natives of Jerusalem, he spoke of "their proper tongue;" and this implies that he was at



the time *speaking in the Greek language*. Again, it follows (2.) from this passage, that Greek, as well as Hebrew, was commonly employed in Jerusalem. This appears from the fact just noticed, that Peter was at the time speaking in Greek within the holy city, and, in all probability, had among his hundred and twenty hearers some who were natives of the place. The same thing may be inferred from his speaking of their "proper," that is, their national tongue, in referring to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; for, had they not been in the habit of making use of *another* language, such an epithet, or any epithet at all, would have been wholly unnecessary. And it seems also to be implied in this passage (3.) that Aramaic was far more prevalent in Jerusalem than in other parts of Palestine. It might be known and used to some extent throughout the whole land, but in such a district as Galilee, Greek was far more commonly employed for all purposes. Hence we explain the fact that St Peter, speaking for himself and his Galilæan colleagues, denominates the Aramaic in reference to the dwellers in Jerusalem *their* proper tongue, instead of saying *our*, as he would naturally have done, had Hebrew, in any form, been the common language of Galilee.

It thus appears that, so far from suffering any damage, our proposition rather derives additional support from a careful consideration of this passage. As was to be expected, the narrative naturally interpreted fits in with, and confirms what we have already seen abundant reason to regard as truth in the question under discussion.\* And the same thing will be

\* I may quote the following sentences from Dean Alford (in loc.) to shew the difficulty in which he is involved by this passage. He says

found to hold good in respect to some of the remaining objections which are now to engage our consideration.

This is especially the case with a passage formerly quoted, which is thought by many to favour the opinion, that Hebrew was the language which our Lord and His disciples usually employed. I allude to the statement made by Paul in the narrative of his conversion given before Agrippa, to the effect that the exalted Saviour then spoke to him "in the Hebrew tongue." The inference which many have drawn from this passage is, that Hebrew was then the prevailing language of the country, and the language accordingly which our Lord habitually made use of during His sojourn upon the earth.\* But it requires only a little consideration to perceive that the statement made by the apostle is far from sanctioning any such conclusion. Even the very translator of the work of Pfannkuche makes a remark which is sufficient to prove how very insecure is the foundation on which the argument in question rests. He appends the following note on the passage as it stands in the original: "By Hebrew, the author no doubt means that we are to understand modern Hebrew, or Aramaic;" and then adds, "The translator cannot help observing that Paul, being a learned Jew, would have understood ancient Hebrew

on ver. 19: "It is principally from this verse that it has been inferred that the two verses, 18, 19, *are inserted by Luke*. But it is impossible to separate it from ver. 18; and I am disposed to regard both as belonging to Peter's speech, but freely Græcised by Luke, inserting *into the speech itself* the explanations τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλ. αὐτ., and τουτέστιν χ. αἶμ., as if the speech had been spoken in Greek originally. This is much more natural than to parenthesise these clauses" Whether it be not more natural still to believe the speech to have been really spoken as the record of it seems to indicate, I leave to the judgment of the reader.

\* Pfannkuche, and most other writers holding his views.

as well ; and if Jesus had spoken to him in the language of the country, there seemed little occasion for the narrator to specify that He had addressed him in that language. All his hearers *would expect nothing else* than that the language of the country had been used, unless the apostle had told them something to the contrary ; from which it seems to follow that Paul on this occasion was addressed in *ancient Hebrew*." We are obliged to the translator on this, and several other occasions, for pointing out to us the weakness of his author's position ; but it is not difficult here to expose the equal weakness of his own. It is quite true, as he remarks, that Paul would never have thought of particularly noticing the fact that Christ addressed him in Hebrew, had that been the ordinary language of public intercourse in the country ; but to attempt to escape from this difficulty by supposing that the Saviour then spoke in ancient, instead of modern Hebrew, is just to exchange one improbability for another. The expression employed in the original is *Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ* ; and the same phrase occurs in other two places, (Acts xxi. 40, xxii. 2,) in both which it is interpreted by common consent as denoting Aramaic, or modern Hebrew. It would, then, be the height of caprice to imagine that, in the present passage, it means not modern, but ancient Hebrew ; and the same rendering must evidently be given it in all the three places in which it occurs. Dr Davidson has justly remarked \* that "the opinion of Diodati that τῇ Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ, in chap. xxii. 2, means *ancient Hebrew*, which the people who listened to Paul did not understand, though they allowed him to proceed for a time in his

\* "Introd. to the New Test.," i., 43.

address, is so preposterous as to require no remark ;” and if not so absurd in the present instance, the proposed rendering is at least equally capricious and untenable. How, then, shall we escape from the dilemma ? How avoid the difficulty both of Pfannkuche and his translator, the one of whom makes the apostle utter an unmeaning statement, and the other of whom attaches an unwarranted signification to his words ? The way is plain :—GREEK, and not HEBREW, was the habitual language then employed in public intercourse in Palestine ; and the apostle, therefore, mentions it as something singular and striking, that he was on this occasion addressed by the Saviour in Aramaic, instead of the usual Greek which might have been expected to be employed.

And now it is necessary to consider another passage of the Acts, which is often referred to with great confidence as militating against our proposition. I refer to chap. xxii. 2, where we are told that “when the Jews heard that Paul spake to them in the Hebrew tongue, *they kept the more silence* ;” these last words especially being rested on by those who contend that our Lord and His disciples *must* have employed the Aramaic language. But a careful consideration of the circumstances in which Paul was then placed, seems quite sufficient to explain, in full consistency with the views advocated in this work, both the fact that the apostle now made use of Hebrew, and the other fact that his hearers were agreeably surprised at being addressed by him in that language. It is plain to every reader of the narrative, that the Jews *expected* on this occasion to be addressed in Greek—a point which proves both their familiarity with that lan-



guage, and the habitual use which was made of it in public intercourse. It is manifest, therefore, from this very passage, that in accordance with what has been so repeatedly urged in the preceding pages of this work, Hebrew was not then the *ordinary* medium of communication employed by public speakers or instructors in Palestine. Why then, it will be asked, did the apostle now make choice of it? and why were the Jews inclined to hear him more patiently on perceiving that he employed it? Evidently, as appears to me, from the special circumstances in which, relatively to his auditors, the apostle was then placed. In the immediately preceding context, we learn that a great uproar had been excited among the Jews on account of Paul's fancied opposition to all that they deemed most sacred. On perceiving him in the temple, some Jews of Asia had cried out, saying, "Men of Israel, help: This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and further *brought Greeks also* into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place." Now, such being the nature of the suspicions with which the minds of the Jews were filled against him, nothing was more fitted to win for him a patient hearing, if that were possible, than at once to commence his address to them in their national language. His adoption of the Hebrew tongue was an instant witness in his favour. It proved that he was not so utterly estranged from all that was specially Jewish as his enemies had represented; and no sooner, accordingly, had the sound of the old, ancestral language been heard from his lips, than the prepossessions against him lost much of their force, and there was manifested a greater disposition

to hear him patiently. This seems to me the only satisfactory explanation of the passage. To infer from it that Hebrew was the *usual* language of public address among the Jews at this time, appears not only opposed to the narrative itself, but serves to strip the conduct of the apostle of all its significance. According to such a view, he had scarcely any option in respect to the language to be employed. It was necessary to speak to the multitude of Jews around him in Hebrew, simply that they might *understand* him, and thus mere common sense dictated the employment of that language. But, on the ground which I maintain, the conduct of the apostle at this time manifested that prudence and skill by which it was in general so remarkably distinguished. It cannot be doubted, that, prevalent as the Greek tongue then was in Palestine, the Jews, like any other nation, would be pleased, on such an occasion as the present, when their prejudices had been greatly excited, to listen so unexpectedly to the accents of their national tongue. And St Paul, with that consummate wisdom which led him to become "all things to all men," now adapted himself to that most natural feeling. To the Jew he became as a Jew, for the purpose of obtaining a favourable hearing; just as formerly at Athens he had, for the same end, become as a Greek to the Greek, and expressed himself in the language and style of an accomplished Grecian.

In close connexion with the passage just considered, we find another objection sometimes derived from the question of the Roman officer to Paul, (Acts xxi. 37,) "Canst thou speak Greek?" This question, according to Father Simon, "implies a supposition that all the

Jews of Jerusalem did not speak in that tongue.”\* But the Roman soldier, who need not be supposed very accurately informed regarding the linguistic condition of different countries, sufficiently shews that this at least was not the bearing of his words, when he adds, “Art not thou then” (or rather, “Thou art not then”) “that Egyptian, who before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?” This passage can hardly be regarded as at all touching the question respecting the language then generally employed in Jerusalem. And Paul by his answer shews, that whatever might be the case with the rude Egyptian referred to, it was nothing strange that a Jew like himself should be found acquainted with the Greek. “I am,” said he, “a Jew of Tarsus, and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak to the people;” a request which the chief captain immediately granted, doubtless expecting, as we have seen the people of Jerusalem themselves did, that Paul would now address the multitude in the Greek language.

Again, it is objected that we read (Matt. xxvi. 73, Mark xiv. 70) that Peter was discovered to be a native of Galilee by the dialect which he employed, and must therefore have been speaking in Hebrew. Granting that this was the case, it proves nothing against the proposition of this work. It is, on the contrary, in the closest accordance with the view which has been exhibited of the relation subsisting between the two languages. It was exactly in such circumstances as those referred to, that we would expect the

\* “Critical History,” p. 52, Eng. edit.; comp. *Grinfield*, “Apology for the Sept.,” p. 76.

vulgar tongue of the country to be employed ; and it is surely nothing strange that the dialect of it which Peter was accustomed at times to speak in Galilee, should now be stated to have been found different from that generally prevalent in Jerusalem.\*

It is not needful, after what was formerly said, to do more than notice the objection brought forward by some, to the effect that "it is scarcely credible that the poor woman who came out of the coasts of Tyre and Sidon could have uttered her cries and lamentations in *Greek*. She spoke the native language of her country. It was Syro-Phenician or Syro-Chaldaic, and the same mixed language, with some variety of dialect, prevailed at that time over Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. There seems the highest probability that most of our Saviour's conversation with the scribes and Pharisees, and that all His addresses to the common people, were spoken in this vernacular tongue. But when it was subsequently ordered that the New Testament should be composed in Hellenistic Greek, they were enabled by that Divine power which we term Inspiration, to convert this provincial and transient

\* *Lightfoot* and others have given several examples from the Rabbinical writers of the difference which existed between the dialects of Jerusalem and Galilee. I may mention, while resting in the explanation given above, that some have questioned whether it was a *Hebrew* dialect at all which was spoken on the occasion in question. On this point *Binterim* (with much truth, as appears to me, in regard to the little value which he attaches to Rabbinical statements) observes : "Sed quod maximum nostræ indagatōnis est negotium, cujus originis hæc erat Galilæorum locutio ; Chaldaicæ, an Syriacæ, an Græcæ, an Latine ? Hoc ultimum nemini in mentem venit. Et si Talmudicis credamus, lis est decisa, eam fuisse Chaldaicæ originis : hos sequuntur nonnulli ex Christianis. At Rabbinorum ineptias dudum detexerunt masuti critici, nosque docuerunt, nullius esse ponderis Talmudicorum asserta, et posterioris ætatis. . . . Probabilius mihi videtur eam Græcæ fuisse originis."—*De Lingua*, &c., p. 167.



dialect into its present fixed and enduring form.”\* In answer to the statements contained in this passage, I merely refer to what has been proved above. Few, I conceive, will be inclined to attribute the *Greek* of the New Testament to inspiration, if it can be accounted for on natural grounds ; and equally few, I trust, will find any difficulty in believing that a woman of Tyre and Sidon, who is expressly styled by St Mark *Ἑλληνίς*, addressed her petition to Christ through the medium of the Greek language.†

The only remaining objection, or quasi-objection, which I have met with, is derived strangely enough from the languages in which the accusation placed over the cross of our Lord was written. Some have argued that Hebrew was employed, because that was the only language known to the inhabitants of the place, while Greek was used merely for the sake of those Gentiles or foreign Jews who were then present in Jerusalem. Hardouin, again, imagines that he finds in the statement that Latin was used, support for his peculiar views as to the then prevailing language of Jerusalem. But such arguments have no real foundation. The statement made, (Luke xxiii. 38,) that the superscription over the Redeemer’s cross “was written in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew,” ‡ does, in fact, form an excellent illustration of the views set forth in this work, as to the relation then subsisting between the languages of Palestine. There was, first of all, the Greek, almost universally understood and

\* *Grinfield*, “Apology,” p. 12.

† See above, Chap. IV., on the language of Tyre and Sidon.

‡ *Casaubon* argues that St Luke preserves the real order in which the three languages were employed, the Greek holding the first place, as might be expected. “*Exercit. xvi. ad Baron. Annal.*,” p. 563.

employed, especially for all literary purposes, and on all public occasions. There was, next, the Hebrew or Aramaic, commonly made use of in familiar intercourse by the natives of the country, but the employment of which was scarcely a matter of absolute necessity to any. And there was, last of all, the Latin, a tongue scarcely ever heard among the Jewish inhabitants, but employed by their Roman rulers, as being the imperial language, for all official purposes.\*

It has been proved then, I believe, beyond the reach of all reasonable objection, and from the undeniable facts of the New Testament history, that Greek, and not Hebrew, was the common language of public intercourse in Palestine in the days of Christ and His apostles. And if this has been done, we may be allowed to express some gratification at the thought, that, in our existing Greek Gospels, we possess, for the most part, the very words of Him to whom the illustrious testimony was borne, "Never man spake like this man." *He* spoke in Greek, and His disciples did the same while they reported what He said. Their inspiration consisted not, as has been thought, in being enabled to give perfect *translations*, either of discourses delivered, or of documents written in the Hebrew lan-

\* Although *three* languages were employed on this occasion, it seems to me evident that, for all practical purposes, Greek alone would have been quite sufficient. Many similar cases might be quoted. Thus, we are told that when the youthful son of James II. was acknowledged by Louis XIV. as the heir of the crown of England, this was done "in Latin, French, and English."—*Macaulay's History of England*, vol. v., 294. On this occasion, French alone would probably have served every practical purpose, but, as in the case of the inscription placed upon the cross, there were formal reasons why the three languages should be used.

guage, but in being led, under infallible guidance, to transfer to paper for the benefit of all coming ages, those *words* of the Great Teacher, which they had heard from His own lips in the Greek tongue ; which had in that form been imprinted on their affectionate memories ; and which were by them, in the same language, unerringly committed to writing, while they literally experienced a fulfilment of the gracious promise,—“THE COMFORTER, WHICH IS THE HOLY GHOST, WHOM THE FATHER WILL SEND IN MY NAME, HE SHALL TEACH YOU ALL THINGS, AND BRING ALL THINGS TO YOUR REMEMBRANCE, WHATSOEVER I HAVE SAID UNTO YOU.”





## PART II.

ON THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE OF ST MATTHEW'S  
GOSPEL, AND ON THE ORIGIN OF THE GOSPELS.



## CHAPTER I.

### STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION RESPECTING ST MATTHEW'S GOSPEL, AND OF THE METHOD IN WHICH THE IN- QUIRY SHOULD BE CONDUCTED.

THREE opinions are current among biblical scholars at the present day, as to the language in which the Gospel of St Matthew was originally written.

The first of these opinions is, that St Matthew wrote his Gospel in *Hebrew only*; that is, in the modified form of Hebrew generally spoken of as the Aramæan or Syro-Chaldaic dialect, and which is supposed to have been the prevalent language of Palestine in the days of Christ. This opinion has been very strenuously maintained by many eminent critics, and is usually expressed by those who hold it with very great confidence. Greswell, for example, declares, that "no matter of fact which rests upon the faith of testimony can be considered certain, if this be not so;"\* and Tregelles remarks, that "in his judgment, *all testimony* is in favour of a Hebrew original of St Matthew's Gospel, and of that only."† To the like effect, a recent writer in one of our leading critical reviews speaks of

\* *Greswell's* "Harmony of the Gospels," i., 125.

† *Horne and Tregelles*, p. 420.

it as “a demonstrated fact” that St Matthew wrote in Hebrew only, and affirms that there is “just as much reason” for believing our existing Greek Gospel to have proceeded from the pen of the apostle, as for maintaining that “the Latin that we have of Irenæus ‘Against Heretics’ is the original of the work of that father.” \*

The holders of this first hypothesis all agree, of course, in regarding our present Greek Gospel as only a version of the original work of the apostle ; but they differ widely among themselves as to the degree of authority which they are inclined to ascribe to the supposed translation. Some few, as Dr Tregelles, endeavour to vindicate for the Greek the same claims to deference and respect as would have been possessed by the original Hebrew. But a much greater number of modern critics, who have espoused the opinion now referred to, follow an opposite course. They deem the supposed fact of the Greek Gospel being an anonymous translation from the Hebrew, a reason for our treating it (if we so please) with far greater liberty than could have been warrantably used with respect to an inspired work ; and, while some are content with simply pointing out what they imagine to be an occasional slip of the translator, others openly contend that his task has been very inaccurately performed, and loudly charge him with numerous and important errors. These varieties of judgment as to the inspiration and authority of the existing Gospel of St Matthew, when it is viewed as a translation from the Hebrew, will be afterwards more particularly considered ; meanwhile, I may observe regarding this first opinion, that without taking into account the ancient fathers of the

\* *Edin. Review*, July 1859, p. 185.



Church, who are in this matter to be looked at rather as witnesses than as advocates, it has been maintained, in modern times, by Grotius, Walton, Mill, Michaelis, Eichhorn, Campbell, Davidson, Tregelles, Cureton, and many others, both on the Continent and in our own country.

The second, and counter opinion to that just stated, is, that St Matthew wrote in *Greek only*; and that, accordingly, the work which we now possess under his name is the veritable original. This opinion numbers, perhaps, as many and as eminent names among its defenders as does the former, although it appears of late years to have been losing ground. The cause of this probably has been that many who would otherwise have felt themselves constrained to adopt and uphold the true and exclusive originality of our present Greek Gospel, have deemed the third hypothesis—to be immediately mentioned—a preferable and more tenable position. There have not, however, been wanting, within a recent period, expressions of opinion in favour of this second hypothesis as confident as those which were quoted in support of the first. Thus, an able writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, (July 1851, p. 39,) declares that “the casual remark of a professed anecdote-collector, whose judgment is entirely disabled by the historian who records it, is, after all, the *sole foundation* for the statement that St Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew;” and the recent editor of Diodati affirms, in his preface, (p. xiii.,) that, “if the records of history and the reasonings of logic have any value, the books of the new canon, from Matthew to the Apocalypse, were certainly Greek in the apostolic autographs.” Among the more celebrated defenders

of this second opinion, I may name, Erasmus, Calvin, Lightfoot, Wetstein, Lardner, Hales, Hug, De Wette, Credner, and Moses Stuart.

It will naturally occur to every reader, from a perusal of the above list of eminent critics, ranged against each other in "this noble controversy,"\* and from the decisive way in which their different opinions have been expressed, that there must be strong arguments on both sides of the question, and that it can be no easy matter for an impartial inquirer to make choice between them. Such is, in truth, the case; and the consequence has been, as usually happens in such circumstances, that a *middle* opinion has been sought, which is thought by its supporters to absorb the conflicting evidence on both sides, and thus to furnish a means of escape from the formidable difficulties which appear to beset both the first and second hypotheses.

This third opinion is, that St Matthew wrote his Gospel *both* in Greek and Hebrew, the two editions being either given to the world simultaneously, as some think, or rather, as more are inclined to believe, at different periods, according to the varying circumstances and necessities of the Church. This hypothesis, although but of comparatively recent origin, can reckon not a few highly-respectable names among its advocates, and is at present a very favourite theory, both in this country and with some able and orthodox theologians in Germany. The ground on which it rests is briefly indicated in these words of Townson:—"There seems more reason for allowing two originals than for contesting either; the consent of antiquity pleading strongly for the Hebrew, and evident marks

\* "Hæc nobilis controversia."—*Poli Synopsis, in Matt.*

of originality for the Greek."\* This opinion has of late years found zealous supporters on the Continent in Guericke, Olshausen, and Thiersch; and, with various modifications, has been defended by Kitto, Horne, Lee, Ellicott, and others, in this country.†

It is a curious psychological problem, how so many able and learned critics, looking at this question with a sincere desire to know the truth, and with exactly the same data on which to form their judgment, should have been guided to such contradictory results. It cannot be doubted, indeed, that, in some cases, dogmatic prepossessions have operated to the detriment of the critical judgment. This is sufficiently obvious from the fact that most Romish writers have been upon the one side, and most Protestant writers on the other. The former have, for the most part, maintained the hypothesis of a Hebrew, and the latter of a Greek original; and this is but too plainly in accordance with the doctrinal leanings of their respective Churches. Romanists are anxious at all times to magnify the authority of the Church; and in this question they find an excellent opportunity for doing so, at the expense of their opponents. They eagerly adopt the

\* "Discourses on the Gospels," i., 31.

† Considerable confusion exists in the lists of writers usually given as holding the several hypotheses. Thus, the name of Whitby is mentioned in *Horne's* "Introduction" (vol. iv., 416-419) among the supporters both of the first and third opinions; and Olshausen is ranked by Stuart (Notes to Fosdick's *Hug*, p. 704) as maintaining the Hebrew original exclusively, whereas he ought to be numbered with the advocates of the third hypothesis, as above. While, as has been remarked by Dr Tregelles, the question cannot be settled by mere names, it is desirable, if these are given at all, that they should be correctly classed under one or other of the three well-defined opinions. Our lists might have been greatly extended, but sufficient names have been given as specimens, and no catalogue could pretend to give the whole.

opinion that our existing Gospel of St Matthew is merely a version from the Hebrew, executed by some unknown translator ; and then they easily fix their adversaries in the dilemma, either of admitting it into the canon of Scripture solely on the ground that the Church has sanctioned it, or of denying that it is possessed of any canonical authority at all. With Protestants again, it is a fundamental principle to uphold the supreme authority of the Word of God, in opposition to all merely ecclesiastical claims upon their reverence and submission, and this they have felt no easy matter in regard to the existing Gospel of St Matthew. In order to place it on the same footing as the other books of the New Testament, it is necessary to make out, either that the original Gospel was, in fact, that which we now possess ; or, that our present Greek is an equally inspired and authoritative work as the original Hebrew ; and in grappling with the difficulties of the question, Protestant writers have sometimes been tempted to *assume* the point which they were required to *prove*, and to seek support for their position on grounds that cannot be maintained in argument.\*

\* Many quotations might be brought forward from the older writers on this subject in illustration of what is here stated. Let the following examples suffice. I quote first from a Popish writer, who seeks thus to embarrass his Protestant opponents :—"Cum Evangelium Matthæi Hebraice sit scriptum, et vero illud hodie non extet, ideo necessario ad divinam et infallibilem *Ecclesiæ auctoritatem* nobis recurrendum, quâ negatâ nullus sit Evangelii hujus usus, cum fides interpretis sit incerta et nomen ignotum."—*Adami Contzenii Commentaria in quatuor Evangelia*, 1626. Such a mode of argument is very commonly to be met with in the pages of Romish controversialists ; and how much it was felt by Protestant writers will be plain from the following examples :—"Si id semel constituatur," says *M. Flucius*, "Nov. Test.," Basil., 1570, "hunc librum initio Hebraice, non Græce scriptum, et ab aliquo ignoti nominis, authoritatisve ac etiam fidei homine, tantâ præsertim libertate, conversum esse, non parum profecto de ejus auctoritate deces-



But after all such deductions have been made, there still remains a large number of thoroughly honest and impartial inquirers, who have been led to opposite conclusions on this question, and that, in some cases, in spite of what might have been deemed their doctrinal tendencies. Thus, to give only two names which may be regarded as representative of many more—Hug, the celebrated Roman Catholic professor in the university of Freyburg, is one of the most strenuous and successful defenders of the Greek original; while Tregelles, an eminent and earnest Protestant scholar among ourselves, is one of the ablest and most determined advocates of the opinion, that St Matthew wrote in Hebrew exclusively.

Leaving out of view, then, dogmatic prejudices, as far from sufficient to account for that diversity of opinion which prevails upon this subject, I would venture to suggest that such differences may, in many cases, find their explanation in the difference of *priority* and *prominence* awarded by the several inquirers to the two great divisions of the evidence. It need scarcely be said that much depends, in every case of conflicting probabilities, on the METHOD in which particular parts of the evidence are taken up and considered. One man may place the facts in such a man-

nerit; quod mehercle Christianis *nullo modo ferendum est.*" Betraying the same anxiety to shelter the existing Gospel of St Matthew from the attacks of the Papists, *Gerhard*, "Annot. in Matt.," p. 38, remarks, "Cum nemine pugnabimus, qui Matthæum Hebraice scripsisse statuit, *modo concedat*, Græcum textum Apostolum, vel Apostolicum virum auctorem habere, ac proinde esse authenticum." In the same spirit, *Jones*, in his very learned work on the Canon, (iii., 252,) observes,—“As we would therefore avoid this consequence of making the authority of this Gospel uncertain, we must conclude it *not to be a translation.*”

ner, as that, while in a sense admitting them all, he will infallibly be led to a different conclusion from another man who has considered them, with equal honesty of purpose, but in a different order. And thus, as chemists now inform us, that it is the *order* in which the particles of a body are arrayed, even more than their *nature*, which imparts to the substance its special properties; so, in an argument like the present, the final result which is reached will often be influenced more by the particular *method* in which the inquiry is conducted than by the actual force of the evidence which is produced. This necessarily follows from the very great plausibility with which, as all that are well informed upon the subject must admit, either side of the question may be argued. There are strong arguments apparently in favour of the proper originality of our existing Greek Gospel; and there are also strong arguments apparently that St Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew. So much is this the case, that, as we have seen, many think it best to admit the force of both classes of arguments as irresistible, and simply on this ground to maintain the hypothesis that the apostle must have written both in Greek and Hebrew. We shall afterwards have occasion to consider at some length this mode of evading all difficulties; but in the meantime we confine our attention to those who take a decided position, either in favour of the Greek or Hebrew original. And in respect to such, I believe that much depends on the *order* in which they are led, either by accident, or by their special habits of mind, to consider the complex and conflicting evidence which is available for settling this question. The arguments urged by the defenders

of the Hebrew original especially, from their being of such an obvious character, are apt at first to produce a great, and, it may be, decided impression. Of this ample proof is presented in the way in which the subject is sometimes alluded to by writers who have manifestly done little more than glance at the various arguments. And I have myself (if the reference may be allowed) to some extent had experience of the effect which is likely in this way to be produced. At first I felt almost compelled, by the force of evidence, to adopt the conclusion that St Matthew wrote in Hebrew only. Beginning my investigation of this subject with a perusal of the arguments of Drs Davidson and Tregelles, they appeared for a time irresistible. It seemed as if the question were finally settled, and that it would be a waste of time longer to inquire into the subject. But on further reflection, a very different estimate was formed. I gradually got round to the *opposite* point of view, took a more complete survey of the *whole* evidence, assigned, as is believed, a *greater* value to the several parts, and at last reached a firm conviction of the truth, diametrically opposed to that in which for a time I was disposed to acquiesce.

On what principles then, and in what method, *ought* this inquiry to be conducted? These are important questions, the right settlement of which must of necessity have no small influence on the success which will attend our efforts in seeking to reach the truth in this matter; and before proceeding further, I shall endeavour to give them clear and satisfactory answers. In doing so, it will be seen that, while in some respects I heartily agree with the defenders of the Hebrew original, in others I entirely and essentially differ from them.

The principles, then, and method by which I humbly think this question should be investigated, are simply these :—

*First*, The question must be decided by *evidence only*.

*Second*, We must take into account the *whole* evidence ; and,

*Third*, The *internal* ought, in point of order, to take precedence of the *external* evidence.

The validity and import of these three principles will now be illustrated and established.

First, *This question, like all others connected with the Word of God, is to be decided by EVIDENCE ALONE.*

In maintaining this proposition, I am quite at one with the upholders of the Hebrew original of St Matthew's Gospel ; but it is necessary for my own sake explicitly to state it. Different ground has unfortunately been taken by some with whose conclusions on the general question at issue I agree, while I cannot but dissent from some of the views which they have expressed. In particular, there is no principle which I deem more valuable in inquiries of this kind than that of being guided by *evidence only* ; and there is no course against which I would be ready more emphatically to protest than that of shaping conclusions according to our own preconceived opinions. It is, I believe, utterly improper, and may prove fatally misleading, to allow our own conceptions of what *ought* to be to have any weight in deciding disputed points in sacred criticism. To attach importance to our own subjective notions, when opposed to evidence, or when unsupported by it, is, in fact, to arrogate to ourselves a position to which we have no rightful claim. For



shall *we* presume to say what God must, or ought to, have done? Is it for *us* to settle beforehand either the manner or the contents of any revelation which He may be pleased to make to us? or to dictate the course which in His providence He should afterwards pursue with regard to it? Surely these are matters which, as every pious and reflecting mind will feel, must be left to His sovereign pleasure; and the only thing which we have to do is to search out and consider the proof with which we are furnished that He *has* acted in one way or another. Evidence, and not predilection, is the guide which we are bound to follow in every matter connected with Scripture. It may happen that, in some instances, a result repugnant to our own wishes will thus be reached. But still, if there is evidence, we must not hesitate. We are bound, if we would act the only part consistent with our character as finite, fallible, and erring creatures, to look to no inward light of our own as the guide to which we will trust—to follow no *ignis fatuus* of our own imagination—but to seek earnestly and diligently for the steady though often feeble ray of evidence which may come to our aid in the midst of uncertainty, and to surrender ourselves to its guidance exclusively in our researches after truth.

These statements sound so much like truisms, that there may appear to some little necessity for making them. But there *is* necessity. Although it might seem that the least reflection on the relative positions of God and man with respect to a Divine revelation—the One as supreme, the other as dependent—would have led to the general adoption and the constant application of the principle which has just been enun-

ciated, this has, unhappily, not always been the case. A very different spirit has sometimes been manifested by the friends of the Bible. They have either ignored, derided, or defied evidence, in their fervent but mistaken zeal for the interests of religion ; and the consequence has been, that they have imperilled that cause which it was their earnest purpose to defend. This is a reproach which, I regret to say, may, with too much justice, be cast upon many of the defenders of the Greek original of St Matthew's Gospel ; and it is a reproach, therefore, from which it is necessary to take special care, in entering on this controversy, to stand completely free. But it is by no means in this question alone that such a spirit has been displayed. It has been more or less exhibited with regard to many other points of sacred criticism ; and, for my own part, I gladly take this opportunity of declaring against the tendency, whenever and wherever it may be manifested.

How often, for example, are biblical scholars assailed with vituperation simply for yielding to the force of evidence ! They call in question, it may be, the genuineness of some passages generally received as inspired Scripture, or the validity of some current interpretation, and they are instantly accused of rashness, presumption, and impiety. The reasons which they allege for what is proposed are not considered ; the arguments which they adduce are not attempted to be refuted ; but on the sole ground that they have opposed some ancient tradition, or questioned the accuracy of some prevailing opinion, they are at once suspected of enmity to the truth of God, and adjudged guilty of taking unwarrantable liberties with His holy Word.

Now, that not a few critics have justly laid themselves open to such charges must be admitted. There has been a large class of theologians in Germany, and representatives of whom are not wanting in this country, who have certainly adopted a kind of procedure with respect to the Word of God which is as impious as it is indefensible. They have constituted themselves *arbiters* instead of *inquirers*; they have elevated their own reason to the tribunal of judgment with respect to the *subject-matter* of revelation, instead of humbly employing it as the means of collecting and deciding upon the *evidence* by which that revelation is substantiated; they have practically denied that there was any need of a supernatural communication from heaven, or, at least, have degraded it from its only worthy position as a supreme rule of right and wrong, by subordinating it to the variable and uncertain dictates of individual conscience; and thus they have presumed to reject as spurious, or to brand as erroneous, whatever did not tally with their own subjective tendencies, and commend itself to *their* approbation as suitable, necessary, or beneficial, in a professed revelation from heaven.\*

No judgment passed upon such critics can be too severe; but let those who utter it beware lest they

\* Every one acquainted with the theological literature of Germany knows how far and fatally the tendencies above referred to have operated in that country; and we have recently had a melancholy illustration of their existence and working among ourselves in the now notorious "Essays and Reviews." The fundamental error of that volume is the place which it assigns to the "verifying faculty" in our own minds, making the human understanding and conscience the supreme arbiter of all truth, and thus destroying the possibility of any authoritative revelation from heaven. How far the *substance* of a professed revelation may be regarded as forming part of its *evidence* is noticed by *Dean Trench*, "Notes on the Miracles," p. 27.

themselves incur the same condemnation. It is a curious illustration of the common saying, "extremes meet," to find that the most violent opponents of rationalism have really at times subjected themselves to the very same censure as that which they have so emphatically pronounced. For, what has, not unfrequently, been their manner of acting? They have, in contravention of all the laws of evidence, clung to certain opinions or prepossessions, which have imbedded themselves firmly in their minds; and more than this, they have branded as impious or audacious those who, in a diligent use of their reasoning powers, and a reverent application of the proofs which have been collected, have felt themselves constrained, in the service of truth, to oppose and condemn certain reigning prejudices and conceptions. Now, in all such cases, we need have no hesitation in saying, that the charge of presumption is far more applicable to those who advance it than to those against whom it is directed. For what is the real meaning of that conduct which, *in spite of evidence*, clings, let us say, to certain passages of the Bible as Divine, and which denounces the diligence that discovers or the honesty that proclaims their spuriousness? \* Is it not, in fact, to maintain that the Word of God is *incomplete* without these passages? that they *ought* to have been in it? and that its Author has acted *unwisely*, either in failing to insert them at first, or in allowing them to be

\* I refer here, of course, to such passages as 1 John v. 7, and Acts viii. 37, which, as every scholar knows, have no claim whatever to a place in the inspired Word of God; and in the immediately preceding remarks I allude to such questions as that respecting the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which, in the opinion of most competent scholars, God has not been pleased to enable us to settle with anything like dogmatic authority.



afterwards called in question from want of sufficient evidence? Such is, in truth, the position assumed by those who persist, on other grounds than those of evidence or rational argument, in maintaining a fixed opinion with respect to any controverted point in sacred criticism ; and it needs only to be stated in order to reveal its presumption and impiety. It is in reality to asperse the wisdom of the God both of grace and providence. It is to set the human against the Divine—it is to let opinion take the place of fact—it is to elevate subjective feelings to the seat of authority, instead of keeping them, as they ever ought to be kept, thoroughly subordinate to objective truth—and thus, in a word, it is to reach, from a different starting-point, the same conclusion as does the rationalistic critic and interpreter of Scripture. Wherever evidence is, on any pretence deserted, *there* is the spirit of rationalism displayed. The only legitimate field open to man's researches with respect to revelation is then abandoned ; and all the guilt of exalting mere human prejudices at the expense of Divine realities is unconsciously contracted. The simple difference, in regard to this matter, between the infidel rationalist and the unreasoning dogmatist is, that, in the one case, there is a bold and reckless avowal made of the standard of judgment which is adopted ; and that, in the other, there is an earnest regard professed for the authority of God's Word, while, notwithstanding, the fallible and human is assigned a *sovereign*, and therefore utterly unsuitable and presumptuous place.

Now, it cannot be denied, as has been already said, that those who uphold the Greek original of St Matthew's Gospel have sometimes done so on grounds

justly liable to the condemnation which has just been expressed. They have allowed their own notions of the probable, or the suitable, to have a very undue influence in deciding the question. This is strikingly observable, for instance, in the writings of Lightfoot. In one place, for example, he expresses himself as follows :—"That which we would have is this,—that Matthew wrote not in Hebrew ;" (he means by this *ancient* Hebrew,) "if so be we suppose him to have written in a language vulgarly known and understood, which certainly we ought to suppose ;" (so far his argument is good, but observe what follows,) "nor that he nor the other writers of the New Testament wrote in the Syriac language, unless we suppose them to have written in the *ungrateful* language of an *ungrateful* nation, which certainly we ought not to suppose. For, when the Jewish people were now to be cast off, and to be doomed to eternal cursing, it was *very improper* certainly to extol their language, whether it were the Syriac mother-tongue or the Chaldee, its cousin-language, into that degree of honour that it should be the original language of the New Testament. Improper certainly it was to write the Gospel in *their* tongue who above all the inhabitants of the world most despised and opposed it." \*

Not a few others on the same side, without going to the extreme indicated in these sentences of Lightfoot, have more or less manifested a similar spirit. They have argued, that the inspired original of St Matthew's Gospel *could not* have been Hebrew, else God would have watched over it and preserved it from destruction, and that to imagine otherwise is to im-

\* Lightfoot's Works, by Pitman, xi., 24.

pugn the wisdom, power, or faithfulness of the Almighty. "This dogmatic view of the question," says Dr Tregelles, "has arisen from considerations relative to God, and His mode of acting towards His creatures. It is alleged that no book which He did not intend for abiding use would be given by inspiration; that no mere translation can be authoritative; and that the old view stamps imperfection on the canon. It is affirmed that it is inconceivable that God should not have insured the preservation of an inspired book, and that the contrary would be in some measure contradictory to the Divine perfections." \*

Now if, as Dr Tregelles seems to imply, this mode of arguing may be alleged as characteristic of the defenders of the Greek original of St Matthew generally, I beg, for one, most heartily to repudiate it. All such reasonings as those he mentions appear to my mind as futile as they are presumptuous. I hold, as strongly as he does, that it is no business of ours to inquire what God *would* or *should* have done; we have only to ask what He *has* done. It is not for us to settle *à priori* God's manner of acting in this, or in any other case. We are quite sure that He will always act in a way worthy of Himself, and in harmony with all His infinite perfections; but to attempt to sketch out beforehand how He must therefore have acted in such a matter as the present appears to me the height of presumption and impiety. For aught we can tell, previ-

\* Tregelles, "On the Original Language of St Matthew's Gospel," (Bagsters, 1850.) The same dissertation had previously appeared in the *Journal of Sacred Literature*, first series, vol. v. I shall frequently refer to this treatise in the following pages, as being one of the most elaborate efforts which have recently been made to uphold the Hebrew original of St Matthew's Gospel.

ous to inquiry, He may have been pleased to give through Matthew an inspired revelation of His will in Hebrew only, or in Greek only, or in both together ; He may have been pleased to let the inspired original perish, and to replace it from the earliest times by an equally inspired and authoritative translation ; or He may have been pleased to let nothing come down to us but an imperfect, unauthorised, or even misleading version of what was at first a heaven-inspired book. One or more of these suppositions may appear to us, according to our several tendencies, very improbable. But we must not, on that account, refuse to hear the evidence, if any, which can be urged in their support. We dare not say beforehand, which, or how many of them, are certainly true or false ; but in what direction soever our own notions and inclinations may tend, we must set ourselves earnestly and diligently to collect and examine the evidence, and must rest humbly and willingly in the conclusion to which that leads.\* Thus far, we have found ourselves in harmony

\* The mode of reasoning here condemned has been far too common. Thus says *Heidegger*, "Enchirid.," p. 707,—"*Si Hebraice Evangelium Matthæus scripsisset, pro eo conservando et Dei Providentia et Ecclesiæ industria perenniter vigilasset indubie.*" In like manner, *Hofman*, "Ad Pritii. Introd.," p. 307, thus expresses himself,—"*Provocamus ad Divinam Providentiam et sedulam Ecclesiæ curam in custodiendis et servandis libris N. T. canonicis. Qui cedat, Deum passum fuisse, ut liber Divino impulsu et instinctu conscriptus, ad religionis Christianæ normam et canonem pertinens, plane periret,*" &c. To the same effect, *Zedler*, in his "Universal-Lexicon," 1739, says of St Matthew's Gospel,—"Hätte es der Evangelist darinnen [*i.e.*, in *Hebrew*] geschrieben, so müssten wirs noch haben, denn niemand wird ohne Beleidigung der göttlichen Providenz und Wahrheit sprechen können, dass der Original-Text verlohren gegangen wäre." This is certainly a very short and easy method of ending the controversy ; and that it is not even yet obsolete will be apparent from the following sentences in that article in *Evan. Chr.*, Sept. 1860, which has already several times been quoted :



with the upholders of the Hebrew original of St Matthew's Gospel, as to the principles on which the argument should be conducted; but this will no longer be the case when we proceed to observe—

Secondly, *That we must, in examining and deciding this question, take into consideration the WHOLE EVIDENCE.*

This is a statement which bears as much the appearance of a truism as the former, but which, though no doubt nominally accepted by all, has also, I believe, been to a great extent practically disregarded. The principle which it contains is not less important than that which has already been considered, for it is

—“We hold it to be impossible, in the very nature of things, that God should give a book of Scripture, say St Matthew's Gospel, by inspiration, and consequently of His own free grace, and yet should not exert His providence to preserve and keep the book so given for the use of His creatures. And this argument becomes a thousandfold weightier when it is considered that the providence of God has been unceasingly and largely exerted to preserve and keep in use in the Church the Greek, which is supposed to be but a translation, while the supposed original Hebrew has been lost. The very same providence that has been exerted for the preservation of the supposed Greek version would have preserved the supposed Hebrew original. But to conceive that an original inspired book has been lost, and a translation of it preserved, with all the same care and energy that would have sufficed for the preservation of the original, is a hypothesis so utterly contradictory of and derogatory to the wisdom, power, and excellency of God's providence, as to amount to an utter and extreme improbability; an improbability so utterly extreme, that we may pronounce it to be an impossibility on the part of God, and an inconsistency which the Divine Being could not have been guilty of.”—Page 469.

Unfortunately for such reasonings, there are numerous undoubted *facts*, both in nature and revelation, which, judged of *à priori*, would certainly appear to us as inconsistent with the perfections of the Most High, as can be any hypothesis connected with St Matthew's Gospel. As stated in the text, all such arguments as the above seem to my humble judgment, not only inconclusive, but perilous and presumptuous in the extreme. Once let *evidence* be forsaken, with respect to this, or any similar question, and all becomes uncertainty and confusion.

manifest that a false result is as likely to be reached by taking a one-sided view of the evidence, as by ignoring it altogether. And in this I believe is to be found the *causa erroris* in the case of those who have pronounced so decisively in favour of the Hebrew original. They have looked only or chiefly at *one* department of the evidence, and have, in fact, not unfrequently argued as if that were in reality the whole. Take, for example, one of the ablest advocates of this hypothesis, Dr Tregelles, and let us observe the manner in which he discusses the question. The very first sentence of his treatise on the subject is sufficient to set his method of arguing before us. "In the following remarks," he says, "I propose to consider what was the original language in which St Matthew wrote his Gospel, by an examination of ancient evidence in connexion with the circumstances which relate to that testimony." By this "ancient evidence," as might be supposed, and as speedily appears, he means only the *statements* made upon the subject by ancient writers; and nothing else is taken into account by him in settling the point at issue. But is it not manifest that, in a question such as the present, there are other things that ought to be considered, than simply what may have been *said* upon the subject? This would be the case even although no Greek Gospel were extant at the present day. If no book at all now existed bearing the name of St Matthew, we should still be warranted in subjecting the statements of antiquity as to the language in which that apostle once wrote to the test of other ascertained circumstances. Every one acquainted with history knows how many assertions made by ancient writers require

to be set aside, because proved inconsistent with other undoubted facts. And it would be to claim infallibility for those ancient fathers who have left us a statement of their convictions on this subject, did we not venture to inquire, by the aid of other existing facts or probabilities, whether they may not possibly have been mistaken. If then, I repeat, we had no Gospel at all bearing the name and ascribed to the authorship of the apostle Matthew at the present day, we should still be justified in considering the statements made regarding his work by ancient writers in the light of facts which had been ascertained as to the state of things in which they wrote, their sources of information, the consistency and independence of their testimony, &c., and thus deciding as to the probability or improbability of their assertions.

But the case is much stronger when we actually hold in our hands a Gospel in Greek bearing the name of the apostle, and transmitted to us from the earliest times as an integral portion of the New Testament scriptures. The question as to its original language cannot in such a case be settled by the mere citation of any number of passages from writers in the second, third, or fourth centuries. The Gospel itself in its present form runs up into a higher antiquity, as is generally admitted, than belongs to any of those testimonies which attribute to it a different original language from that in which we now possess it. It existed, as most allow, in *Greek*, before the apostles left the earth ; it exists in that language still ; and surely, therefore, it ought *itself* to be taken into account as forming an essential part of the evidence in that question which we are called upon to consider.

Moreover, there are other indisputable facts connected with the volume of which the Greek Gospel of St Matthew forms a part, which have a manifest bearing upon the discussion, and must not be overlooked. How is it possible, for instance, with any propriety, to leave out of view, in dealing with this question, the striking and important fact, that our present Gospel of St Matthew abounds in *verbal coincidences* with the other Gospels, all of which are now universally admitted to have been written in the Greek language? There *may be* a satisfactory mode of explaining this fact without finding it necessary to adopt our supposition, that St Matthew's Gospel, like the rest, was written in Greek—a point to be afterwards fully considered—but at any rate, the striking phenomenon which has been mentioned cannot properly be overlooked in discussing the question. Yet overlooked it *has* been by most of the defenders of the Hebrew original. In their excessive zeal for “ancient evidence,” they have been tempted to forget what is both the most ancient and the most trustworthy of all—the phenomena presented by the Gospel itself. St Matthew has a voice, as well as St Jerome, in the settlement of this question. But that voice has been almost entirely disregarded by those who have maintained that our present Greek is a translation from the Hebrew. They have eagerly inquired what Papias and Origen and other early fathers had to say in the matter; but they scarcely think it worth their trouble to ask of the writer of the Gospel himself what testimony *he* bears, by the *special character attaching to his work*, as to the language in which it was originally given to the world.

I complain, then, with regard to the upholders of



the Hebrew original, that they do not take into account the *whole* evidence. Dr Tregelles very frequently and very warmly contends for the paramount authority of *evidence* in settling this and all other biblical questions ; and so far, as has been already seen, I most cordially agree with him. But, then, he appears to me most unduly to *limit* the evidence. It is only one kind of proof at which he will look ; and that, as I believe, by no means the surest or strongest kind—the proof which is furnished in the express declarations of ancient writers. And it is on these, almost exclusively, that the opponents of the true originality of our Greek Gospel rest their cause. Quotations from the ancient fathers are marshalled so thick and deep, that *these* are seen, and scarcely anything besides. Indeed, as was previously hinted, it is no easy matter for an unprejudiced inquirer ever to get round to the other side of the question at all. As soon as he enters on the investigation, his judgment is apt to be greatly biassed, if indeed, it is not completely decided, by the arguments thus prominently presented by the writers referred to ; and he has certainly no chance of hearing from them the caution, that a *full half* at least of the evidence remains yet to be considered. The consequence is that he may scarcely look at the other department of the evidence at all, but may rest in the conclusion already formed ; whereas, had he followed out the inquiry by contemplating the question from a different standpoint, he might have been led to a very different result. I am greatly disposed to believe that not a few who look into this controversy never succeed in obtaining more than a *partial* view of the various considerations which make up our available data for

determining the question. Their opinion is formed in favour of the Hebrew original while one important branch of the evidence remains wholly unconsidered. And then, if they are persuaded to devote attention to that at all, it is only to deny that it should have any great influence on the question at issue, to argue as if the controversy were already closed, and to explain away all that seems inconsistent with the conclusion which has been already reached.

It is necessary, therefore, to insist on our second principle—that the *whole* evidence must be considered. Quotations from ancient writers, statements by early fathers, prevailing traditions in the Church, are only one element in deciding this question. The entire mass of evidence, internal as well as external, must be taken into account ; and the judgment must be guided by a fair and candid estimation of the whole. In all questions, of course, except those capable of mathematical certainty, the arguments brought forward must be conflicting in greater or less degree. Sometimes they will be so equally balanced as to leave the problem utterly insolvable ; and sometimes they will be so largely on one side, as almost to amount to demonstration ; while infinite degrees of probability will lie between these two extremes, drawing the mind more or less powerfully either in the one direction or the other. But even in the most difficult and perplexing cases, we have this rule to guide us—that the same principle which renders it our duty to follow evidence at all, also requires that we should submit to the *preponderating* evidence, though perhaps unable fully to explain that which points to a different conclusion. Now such may be our position with respect to the

present question. We may find enough of evidence on the one side to convince us that *there* lies the truth, yet may not be able completely to remove every objection that may be urged on the other. And if the proof thus presented is of such a *nature*, whatever its amount, as appears irresistible, the most that can be demanded is, that we furnish a possible or plausible explanation of the difficulties which seem to lie against the conclusion to which it leads. If again, the argument can, on no proper ground, be held clearly conclusive on either side, our duty will be discharged by taking a full and impartial view of the entire evidence attainable, and then diffidently forming our judgment according to probability, which, as Butler remarks, is to us "the very guide of life."

As will afterwards appear, I believe that there *is* evidence both of a kind and amount which renders it morally certain that our present Gospel of St Matthew is not a translation, but an original work. The same opinion, however, is held by many with respect to the evidence in favour of the very opposite conclusion. This singular diversity of feeling among biblical scholars was above ascribed to the different methods which they pursue in dealing with this subject; and the important question, therefore, now arises for discussion—In what order *ought* the different parts of the evidence to be adduced? what arguments have a claim to be *first* considered? I am thus led to observe—

Thirdly, *That the logical and natural course is to allow the INTERNAL to take precedence of the EXTERNAL evidence.*

In maintaining this proposition, it seems almost sufficient to suggest the obvious consideration that

there are circumstances easily conceivable in such a work as St Matthew's Gospel, which would render it perfectly *impossible* that it could be a translation. The existence of such circumstances, or not, can only be ascertained by an actual inspection of the document; and, therefore, the proper course manifestly is first to examine the history itself before allowing our judgments to be swayed by any of those statements which may have been made respecting it.

It is scarcely needful to illustrate at any length the assertion which has just been made, that a writing *may* possess in itself sure and evident marks that it is, or is not, a translation. This is, in fact, the case with most versions, and most originals, in every language. In spite of what has been said to the contrary, I cannot but hold that there is nothing which is more certainly within the power of literary tact and experience, than, in all ordinary cases, to distinguish between an original and a translated work. No two languages approach so closely to each other in idiom as to allow a translator, who is scrupulously faithful to the work he has undertaken, an opportunity of imparting to his production the air and character of an original. In cases of very free translation, indeed, such as Pope's translation of Homer, the traces of the original language may be almost, or altogether, obliterated; but this cannot take place when (as is claimed for our Greek Gospel of St Matthew by most of those who deem it a version from the Hebrew) a close and faithful adherence is preserved to the original. A foreign and awkward air will almost inevitably attach to every translation from one language into another, if any approach to *literal exactness*



is sought to be maintained in the version that is produced. It is sufficient to refer in proof of this to the Septuagint translation from the Hebrew into Greek, to the many close translations from the German or French into our own language at the present day, or to the literal versions of the ancient classics into the various tongues of modern Europe. In all such cases, a person of ordinary ability and experience would have no difficulty in at once detecting the translation, and in assigning the reasons which had led him to that conclusion.

Dr Tregelles, however, seems inclined to deny this ; and asks, in confirmation of his views, what traces the Lord's Prayer in English bears of being a translation. We may admit that no such traces are to be found, without any prejudice to our argument. The injustice of comparing a few lines, like those referred to, with the Gospel of St Matthew at large, must be apparent to every reader. The Lord's Prayer is so short as to form no parallel to an extensive work like the entire evangelical history ; and no one, I suppose, will deny that *occasional* passages may easily be found in any translation which will pass as original. And besides, the Lord's Prayer is a composition of such a nature, that the points which specially mark a translation are necessarily wanting in it. It consists of a number of independent clauses, each complete in itself, so that the different modes of connecting one part of a sentence with another, which serve greatly to distinguish different languages, cannot appear. Indeed, *one* of its petitions might as fairly be made the test of its being a translation as the *whole*.

But whether it be possible or not to detect a *trans-*

*lation* by its intrinsic character, it is unquestionable, at all events, that a work may contain, in itself, plain and unmistakable proof that it is an *original*, and not a translation. How certain is it, for example, that the history of Thucydides, the odes of Horace, and the dramas of Shakspeare, are original, and not translated works! They bear evidence, not only in the style and idiom in which they are written, but by the manner in which they reflect the life and habits of the age and country in which they were respectively composed, as well as by the frequent allusions which they contain to national affairs and contemporary occurrences, that they were written originally by the persons whose names they bear, and could not possibly have been translations made by them at first, or by any others afterwards, from a different language. Not the most united external testimony would ever persuade the world to the contrary, or lessen, in the faintest degree, the conviction arising from a perusal of the works themselves, that they were written originally in the language in which we still possess them.

Since, therefore, it is quite possible that internal evidence *may* exist which renders it absolutely certain that our present Greek Gospel of St Matthew is not a translation, but an original work, it is plainly the proper and logical course first of all to inquire whether or not such evidence is to be found. If we adopt the opposite course, and begin our investigation with a consideration of the evidence of testimony, then, after reaching our conclusion with respect to it, we may find, on turning to the Gospel itself, that that conclusion cannot be sustained, as being incon-

sistent with other plain and incontrovertible facts. When any one therefore tells us, on our taking the existing Gospel of St Matthew into our hands, as the advocates of its Hebrew original do tell us, that it is a translated, and not an original work, the first and most obvious question to be considered is the evidence borne by the Gospel itself with respect to that assertion. On opening and examining it, we may find proof the most conclusive either for or against such a declaration. It may appear either plain, probable, possible, or impossible, that our present Gospel should be regarded as a translation. There are works, as every one will admit, which are seen, on the very first look, to be translations. There are also other works, as has just been shewn, of which it may most confidently be maintained, on a mere examination of their contents, that they are originals. And others still, let us admit, (such as some of the apocryphal books of the Old Testament,) may be found, of which it cannot positively be declared, on internal grounds, whether they are originals or translations, but which may be accepted as either, according to the external evidence which accompanies them. If it is found, on an inspection of our Gospel, that it bears in itself plain or probable evidence of being a translation, then the statements which have been made to that effect, may at once and most willingly be received ; if, on the other hand, it clearly appears from such an inspection that it cannot possibly be a translation, then the statements in question must be resolved into a misapprehension ; and if, finally, it is found difficult or impossible to say, from internal considerations, whether it be a translation or an original work, then the preponderating

external evidence may be allowed to decide the question.

Such, then, is the course of argument to be followed in the ensuing discussion. We are to look first at the internal evidence, and allow it to determine the weight which ought to be assigned to the external. This I cannot but regard as the logical and natural method ; and it is a method, I trust, which will recommend itself to the approbation of the majority of readers. I can scarcely hope, indeed, that writers like Dr Tregelles, who is in the habit of almost ignoring internal evidence on all critical subjects, will not object to the course which has been indicated. To such an extent does the eminent critic referred to carry his repugnance to all objective proof of an intrinsic character, that, in reference to our present subject, he seems, in one passage, to deny it the very name of *evidence*, and that although it may amount to demonstration. He says, (*ut sup.*) “It has been argued that our Greek Gospel *must* be an original document. If this must be the case, let it once be demonstrated, and then *evidence* may be overlooked.” Here there is either a very unfortunate use of language, or there is furnished a striking proof of that one-sidedness, which, as was before remarked, has greatly, though unintentionally, characterised the defenders of the Hebrew original. Dr Tregelles appears to imagine that there is nothing which can properly be called evidence on the other side at all. And yet, if this is his meaning, he calls, with some seeming inconsistency, for a demonstration from that side, after which he tells us “*evidence* may be overlooked.” Why, how could the supposed demonstration be effected except by evidence ? And how could evidence



be overlooked after that demonstration had been accomplished? There remains, in fact, *no evidence to be overlooked* after demonstration has been reached: all the counter-statements which may then be made can only be regarded as a congeries of errors.

But although I can perhaps hardly hope for the concurrence of Dr Tregelles and some others in the justness and propriety of that method which has been indicated, it is not, on that account, left to rest entirely on its own merits without the sanction of some very eminent critics. On the contrary, there may be produced in its behalf the authority of celebrated names on both sides of the question. Thus, on the side of the Greek original, Credner, after bringing forward very fully the testimonies usually quoted from the fathers, to the effect that St Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, still holds that the question, whether or not our present Gospel is an original or a translated work, remains undecided, and that it can be settled only by a consideration of its internal character. "What biblical criticism, then," he says, "has to do in this matter, is simply to concern itself with the following question—whether or not our present Gospel of St Matthew bears evidence *in itself* that it is a translation from the Hebrew?"\*

\* "Einl. in das N. T.," § 46. In his last work, "Geschichte des Neut. Kanon," published since his death, Credner repeats, in substance, the above statement as to the manner in which the question respecting the original language of St Matthew's Gospel must be settled, remarking of that Gospel, as well as of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Aus inneren Gründen eine ursprünglich hebräische Abfassung nicht stattgefunden haben kann," p. 136. I may take this opportunity of observing that, however much one may regret the strong rationalistic tendencies of Credner, it is impossible not to admire the clearness and fulness with which he treats of every point which falls under his con-

And, on the other side, it is curious to observe, that even Eichhorn, one of the most determined upholders of the Hebrew original, also expresses himself as if he deemed the proof of translation quite incomplete, until he had taken into consideration the character of our existing Greek Gospel. He proceeds, from an examination of the passages usually quoted from the ancients in this controversy, to an exhibition of the arguments which he imagines may be derived from the Gospel itself in support of his hypothesis, and heads the chapter in which he treats of these—"Decisive Proof that St Matthew wrote in Hebrew." \*

Since, then, one critic (Credner) believes that from the Gospel itself we must derive the only conclusive proofs of its originality, and another critic (Eichhorn) supposes that in itself alone we can find decisive indications of its being a translation, the *internal* evidence is thus acknowledged on both sides as being the dominating element in the settlement of this question, and naturally, therefore, in the first place, demands our attention.

Before, however, proceeding to an examination of

sideration. As Moses Stuart remarks (Fosdick's Hug, p. 703) regarding a then expected publication of Credner's, "This must be a work full of interest when in such hands as those of Credner, and this will be true whether the *theory* he adopts be right or wrong; for, in whatever direction he moves, he never makes an idle or insignificant movement." I cordially subscribe to this statement; and, while differing widely from him on many points, gratefully acknowledge myself more indebted to Credner for direction and suggestion, as well as positive information with respect to many of the points treated of in this work, than to any other writer.

\* "Entscheidender Beweis für einen hebräischen Grund-text: Fehler des griechischen Uebersetzers."—*Eichhorn's Einl. in das N. T.*, i., 106.

the Gospel itself, I may be allowed briefly to indicate how far the conclusion reached in the First Part of this work, as to the prevailing language of Palestine in the time of Christ, appears to me to bear upon the special question now awaiting discussion.

All must see that the linguistic condition of the country at the time furnishes a strong ground of probability as to the language in which a Jewish writer such as St Matthew would be likely to address his countrymen. If the prevailing language of public address was Hebrew, then in Hebrew would he probably write, and *vice versâ*. Accordingly, most of those who have maintained the Hebrew original of the first Gospel, have also striven to prove that Hebrew was then decidedly the prevalent language among the Jews of Palestine. They have even rested their whole cause upon this consideration. Thus says Father Simon, in opposition to the view that St Matthew wrote originally in Greek:—"It hath indeed been more convenient that the books of the New Testament should be written rather in Greek than in another language. But here it is only argued concerning the Jews of Palestine, to whom St Matthew first preached the gospel. And since those people spake Chaldaic, it was necessary for him to preach to them in this same language. On *these grounds* all antiquity hath relied, when they have believed that St Matthew had composed his Gospel in Hebrew."\*

This extract (which has often been repeated in substance by later writers) shews very clearly how important is the question respecting the reigning lan-

\* "Critical History of the New Testament," by *Richard Simon*, (from the French ; London, 1689,) p. 43.

guage of Palestine at the time to the upholders of the Hebrew original of St Matthew's Gospel. Hardly any reason can be imagined for the evangelist having written in Hebrew, unless that were the only, or, at least, the ordinary language then made use of for literary purposes in Palestine. This is fully admitted in the words which have just been quoted from Father Simon. And we find the same writer (in reply to Isaac Vossius, who had called those critics "*semi-docti et fanatici*" that believed our Lord and His disciples to have spoken in Hebrew,) expressing himself as follows in another passage:—"The ancient ecclesiastical authors who have affirmed that St Matthew hath written his Gospel in Hebrew, would be all fanatics, for they declare that they have embraced this opinion *only because* the Jews of Jerusalem then spake Hebrew, that is to say, the Chaldee or Syriac tongue."\* Moreover, every one who believes that the first Gospel was originally written in Hebrew, must also hold, in opposition, as will afterwards appear, to evidence which is bound up in the Gospel itself, that the evangelist in writing it had regard *only* to the inhabitants of Palestine. St Matthew could never, of course, have written his work in Hebrew with any view to its general diffusion, since that language was at no time understood beyond a very limited territory. And very strong cause certainly ought to be shewn why the first apostolic account of a religion destined for all nations should have been written in a tongue known to one nation only; and that while another language existed, which, it must be admitted, was, in no small degree, familiar to that

\* *Simon*, ut sup., p. 46.



nation, and was at the same time generally understood throughout the world.

The whole cause, then, of the advocates of the Hebrew original, as they themselves acknowledge, stands or falls according to the manner in which this question regarding the prevalent language of Palestine in the time of Christ is settled. They frankly confess, that if it can be shewn that the Jews of that period generally employed Greek, and not Hebrew, in their public intercourse with one another, the controversy may be regarded as settled in favour of the Greek original of the first Gospel. I have ventured to accept the challenge thus proposed. In the preceding chapters of this work, I have endeavoured to prove, by a large induction of facts, that the Jews of Palestine *did* then, for the most part, make use of Greek in their public dealings with one another, and more specifically as the language of religious address. If I have succeeded in this, then, in the estimation of the most strenuous defenders of the Hebrew original, the very ground on which their opinion rests, and has always rested, is irrecoverably swept away. We shall hear no more of the statements of antiquity. Papias and all his followers must be declared in error. The originality of our existing Gospel of St Matthew is acknowledged to be established ; the error on which the opposite opinion depended is exposed ; an end is put to this long and fluctuating controversy ; and the truth is at last reached respecting a very interesting and important subject of investigation.

Such, according to many able upholders of the Hebrew original of St Matthew's Gospel, is the result, if the conclusion aimed at in the First Part of this

volume be admitted. If it can be proved that Christ and His disciples generally made use of the Greek language, they profess themselves ready to resign their case as no longer defensible. Supposing, then, the previous course of argument allowed to be satisfactory, we might, according to them, simply append to it the corollary, that *St Matthew wrote his Gospel in Greek, and not in Hebrew*. But I am not inclined to avail myself of such a summary mode of settling this question. It seems to me that, even accepting the conclusion which has, I believe, been established in the preceding pages, the case of the defenders of the Hebrew original is not yet quite so desperate as some of them imagine. I can conceive that, though Christ and His disciples did usually speak in Greek, St Matthew, for a special purpose, and addressing a particular class, might, nevertheless, have written in Hebrew. We know that Josephus, writing τοῖς ἁνω βαβυλῶνις, at first published his History of the Jewish War in Hebrew. And the same or a similar object may have been contemplated by St Matthew in writing his Gospel. This supposition has, in fact, been made by Isaac Vossius, who, strongly as he contends for the prevalence of Greek in Palestine, still thinks, as his views are stated in his treatise entitled "Ad Tertias Simonii Objectiones Responsio," that St Matthew wrote his Gospel "Hebraice in usum Gentium in Parthiâ viventium ditione, quibus Babylonius seu Chaldaicus sermo erat vernaculus." It remains, therefore, that we examine both the Gospel itself and the ancient testimonies which have been handed down regarding it, in order to discover whether there is yet *any* ground for conceiving that it was originally writ-

ten in Hebrew, and that the existing Greek is but a translation from that long-lost document ; or whether there is reason to believe that the evangelist published *two* editions of his Gospel, of which the former, in Hebrew, speedily perished, while the latter, in Greek, continues in our hands at the present day.

## CHAPTER II.

### INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF THE ORIGINALITY OF ST MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

THE special purpose contemplated in this chapter is to collect and consider the proofs which may be derived from the existing Greek Gospel of St Matthew, viewed by itself, in favour of its originality. On our hypothesis, some such indications are, of course, to be expected. If St Matthew, like the other evangelists, wrote originally in Greek, we cannot but suppose that *his* work, no less than theirs, will bear in itself the proper stamp and evidence of originality. I proceed, then, to set before the reader some of those considerations arising from the character of the Gospel itself, which seem to me harmoniously to combine in illustrating and establishing its originality in the form in which we still possess it.

And in entering on this portion of the argument, I may remark,—

I. That, on a complete and thorough examination of the Greek Gospel of St Matthew, it is seen everywhere to possess *the air and character of an original, and not a translated work.*

The maintainers of the Hebrew original pretty



generally allow that this is the case. Dr Tregelles, in particular, makes the admission as fully as could be desired, and simply denies that, on this *one* account, it is necessary to abandon the idea of a Hebrew original. "It is granted," he says, "that St Matthew's Gospel in Greek does not seem like a translation; that the language does not seem less original than the other New Testament writings; and that, unless we had external testimony, we should probably not have imagined it to be a version; but all this does not *prove* the contrary."\* I am not inclined to press this point with him, nor is it at all necessary to do so. There are many other grounds, as we shall see, on which dependence may safely be placed in this controversy. But it is something, at least, to get such a candid and explicit admission as that just quoted, from one of the most strenuous upholders of the Hebrew original. It may serve as a reply to very different allegations which have been made by some others on the same side of the question. Eichhorn,† Davidson,‡ and Cureton,§ all imagine that there *are* manifest marks of the translator to be discovered in our existing Greek Gospel. Eichhorn reckons up a vast number of palpable errors of translation, as he deems them,—undertakes, indeed, to shew that there are some such to be found in every chapter. Davidson, on the other hand, will not allow that there are any positive mistakes, (except, perhaps, in the translation *νίκος*, chap. xii. 20,) but traces the hand of the translator in several passages; while Cureton, again, decidedly prefers, in very many

\* *Tregelles, ut sup.*, p. 15.

† *Eichhorn*, "Einl. in das N. T.," § 106.

‡ *Davidson's* "Introduct. to the N. T.," p. 47, &c.

§ *Cureton's* "Syriac Gospels," pp. vi.-xliv.

cases, the readings of that Syriac recension of St Matthew which he recently edited, to our existing Greek, and openly charges the supposed translator with numerous and evident errors.

It will be necessary to examine the arguments of Cureton at some length in a subsequent chapter, and they may, therefore, in the meantime be left untouched. As to the position assumed by Eichhorn, it would be a waste of time to expose its absurdity. All critics are now agreed that he himself, and not the writer or translator of the Gospel, was the person in error. It is enough to say, in the words of Credner, that "the pretended instances of mistranslation which Bolten, Eichhorn, and Bertholdt reckon up, have no existence save in their own imagination ;" \* or, in those of Dr Davidson himself, that "those who impugn the authority of the Greek Gospel desert antiquity in denying its identity with the Aramæan, written by Matthew, while they maintain the opinion of that same antiquity concerning the fact of Matthew writing in Hebrew." †

We have, then, to concern ourselves, in this place, only with those writers who admit that there are few or no traces of translation in our present Gospel of St Matthew, and yet deem that an unimportant circumstance in connexion with the subject under discussion. They confess that it does not look *like* a translation, but they are not the less inclined, on that account, to conclude that it *is* a translation. It seems to them quite a natural thing that it should appear what it is not,—should bear the character of an original, while all the time it is really a version. "I wonder," says

\* "Einl. in das N. T.," § 46.

† "Introduct. to the N. T.," p. 75.

Greswell, "what marks of a translation it should be expected to exhibit."\*

Now, unless it be supposed that the imagined translator was under supernatural influence, and that accordingly by a miraculous agency his work had a special character attached to it,—a supposition which, so far as I know, has never been made,—I venture to maintain, that the fact of its being *unlike* a translation tends powerfully to support the opinion that it is no translation. For, why, it may be well asked, should this immunity belong to *it*? Why should *it* be distinguished among all other works of the same kind, by wanting the marks of what, on the supposition, it really is,—a close and accurate version of a previous Hebrew work? How has it happened that in this case, and in no other, the obvious inherent evidences of such translations have been escaped? And by what strange art (truly in this instance an *ars celare artem*) has this one translator succeeded in entirely concealing the real nature of his work, and in imparting to it the whole appearance and impress of an original?

Every one who has tried his hand at translation knows how difficult it is to approach perfection in such a work. There are two things at which every good and faithful translator must aim. He must endeavour, in the first place, to come as near to literal exactness as possible; and he must take care, in the second place, not to sacrifice the idiom of the language into which his version is made. It must be his effort to give neither more nor less than the meaning of his author; to preserve the special characters of style and

\* "Harmony of the Gospels," i., 127.

thought which appear in the original ; and, at the same time, to do no violence to the genius of the language into which he transfers it. And who has ever succeeded for any length of time in perfectly accomplishing these two objects ? What translator has not felt himself compelled, at times, to give a paraphrase rather than an exact version of his author, in order that he might avoid the intolerable awkwardness which a literal version would have caused ? But nothing of this, as is confessed, appears in our existing Gospel of St Matthew ; it is allowed to possess all the characteristics which belong to an original work ; and if, notwithstanding, it must be accepted as a translation, it can only, in that case, be regarded as a sort of literary miracle, and one which is as unique as it is amazing, as solitary in kind as it is exalted in degree.

“How can I read the Gospel of St Matthew, as it now lies before me,” asks Professor Stuart,\* “and feel that I am reading a *translation* made in ancient times ? Where is any *version* like it ? The Septuagint ? That is greatly diverse from it in very many and important respects.” In the truth of this statement I cordially agree, though from its being unaccompanied with proofs, it is apt to produce little impression. It is scarcely enough simply to affirm with the excellent critic quoted, that “in very many and important respects,” the Septuagint translation differs from our Greek Gospel of St Matthew : in order to give any weight to the declaration, some specimens of such differences must be produced. I shall, therefore, notify a few particulars in which the differences may be ob-

\* *Stuart's* “Notes to Fosdick's Hug,” p. 710.



served, as these have occurred to myself in reading over the Greek of Matthew, and comparing it with a book of the LXX., perused for this special purpose.

No portion of the Septuagint could more fairly be employed as a test in this inquiry than the book of Genesis. Every scholar knows that the Pentateuch is by far the best executed portion of the whole; and of the Pentateuch, no book approaches so nearly in simplicity of subject and style to Matthew, as does Genesis. Taking, then, the first book of the Old Testament in Greek, and comparing it with the first book of the New Testament in the same language, the one an acknowledged, the other an alleged translation from the Hebrew, such differences as the following are at once perceptible :—\*

The paucity of the Hebrew language in conjunctions, and the very frequent use which is therefore made of the simple copulative, are well known. The “and” continually occurs in connecting clauses or sentences, where in Greek, which is so rich in particles, some other word would be employed. Now, we find this Hebrew usage copied very remarkably by the Greek translator of Genesis, while in Matthew no such thing appears. On the contrary, our first Gospel is distinguished for the frequent occurrence in it of adverbs of time. While *καὶ* is continually made to do service in the Septuagint in the sense of “then” or “when,” the proper adverb is as constantly employed in the

\* I attach no importance in this investigation to the *paronomasia* which is supposed to occur in chap. vi. 16. Much as has been made of it by some writers, multitudes of better examples might be discovered in almost any translation. Justly does Credner declare, (“Einl.,” § 47,) “That single wretched paronomasia is of no consequence whatever in shewing the Greek original of our present Gospel.”

Gospel. It has been observed that *τότε* occurs no less than *ninety* times in Matthew,—a striking contrast, certainly, to the Greek version of the book of Genesis, in which that particle of time is scarcely ever used at all, but, as in the corresponding Hebrew, has its place usurped by the simple copulative.

Again, a well-known Hebrew idiom is that by which participial or verbal constructions are made to supply the want of adverbial expressions. Thus in Genesis xxv. 1, the Hebrew literally translated is, “And Abraham *added*, and took a wife,” to denote the idea that he *again* married; and in chap. l. 24, Joseph is represented as addressing his brethren in words which, literally rendered, are “God visiting will visit you,” to express the *certainty* with which Divine interposition might be looked for by the Israelites. Both of these Hebrew idioms are slavishly adopted by the Septuagint translator, the former passage being rendered, Προσθέμενος δὲ Ἀβραὰμ, and the latter, Ἐπισκοπῇ δὲ ἐπισκέψεται ὁ θεὸς ὑμᾶς, while no trace of any such servile and awkward renderings is found in Matthew, but the equivalent Greek adverbs are employed.\*

Numerous other instances of a violation of the Greek idiom by the Septuagint translator, in order to

\* I do not mean to affirm that the Hebrew idioms noticed above had not found their way, like many others, into the Hebraistic Greek of Palestine. Instances of both may be seen in the Gospel of St Luke, chap. xx. 11, and chap. xxii. 15. Although examples of their use, therefore, had been found in the Gospel of St Matthew, these would not necessarily have proved it to be a translation; but their entire absence seems fitted to support the conclusion that it is *no translation*. The first idiom might have been expected to occur at chap. xxi. 36, and the second at chap. xxi. 41, since it seems probable that they would have been used in these passages in the corresponding Hebrew.

approach the Hebrew mode of expression, might be mentioned. But let me only further notice such reduplications as *σφόδρα, σφόδρα*, (Gen. vii. 19 ;) such almost unintelligible expressions as *ἐθαύμασά σου τὸ πρόσωπον*, (Gen. xix. 21 ;) such literal renderings as *ἤρεσαν οἱ λόγοι ἐναντίον Ἑμμώρ*, (Gen. xxxiv. 18,) &c.—evident marks of the translator, of which no examples are to be found in Matthew.

Nor can it be said, in answer to these remarks, that in the case of St Matthew, there was a studied accommodation to the Greek idiom, while in the Septuagint a simple effort was made to express the sense in a literal form, without any regard to the niceties of language. Neither assertion can be maintained. There is evidently no peculiar effort made in St Matthew's Gospel to approach to pure Greek expressions ; on the contrary, it is written in exactly the same dialect as the other Gospels, and has, perhaps, a stronger Hebrew colouring than any of them.\* The writer manifestly did not aim at avoiding Hebraistic forms of expression, and yet he escaped those awkwardnesses which appear so frequently in the Septuagint, and succeeded in imparting to his work all the ease and rhythm of an original composition. All this is naturally accounted for only on the supposition that the evangelist did, in fact, like his inspired brethren, compose

\* This consideration furnishes a sufficient answer to such statements as that of *Bishop Middleton* in his notes on Matt. i. 2,—“Throughout the whole of this genealogy there is a use of the article which is wholly foreign from the Greek practice, and which in some degree favours the historical account of the Hebrew original of St Matthew's Gospel.”—*Doctrine of the Greek Article*, p. 164. Not only in respect to the *article*, but in many other points, the Hebrew rather than Greek idiom appears in the first Gospel, as in every part of the New Testament.

his work in the Greek language, but Greek tinged, as theirs also was, by the Hebrew medium through which it passed.

And, on the other hand, it is plain that the Septuagint translator took the liberty, from time to time, of avoiding the peculiar Hebrew mode of expression employed in his original, when he conceived that its literal counterpart would be ambiguous or absurd in Greek. I have noticed several examples of this in reading over the book of Genesis, but shall mention only, as illustrative of the point in question, the instance which occurs at chap. xxxiv. 30. By turning to the English (or German) version of the passage, the peculiar Hebrew phrase here employed will be discovered, for it has most needlessly and offensively been retained by our translators. But in the Septuagint we find it entirely avoided, and the sense given as follows,—*μισητόν με πεποιθήκατε, ὥστε πονηρόν με εἶναι πᾶσι τοῖς κατοικοῦσι τὴν γῆν*.<sup>\*</sup> We see, then, that it was not from want of a desire to accommodate his work to the requirements of the Greek language that the translator fell into those inelegances which have been noted. He manifestly felt the difficulty which every faithful translator must always feel—the difficulty of keeping close to the original before him, and yet not violating the idiom of the language in which he writes. Sometimes the one and sometimes the

\* On the other hand, there are many instances in which the English version properly avoids the peculiar Hebrew phrase, while it is closely copied in the Septuagint. Thus, in Gen. xli. 1, we read in English, "And it came to pass at the end of two *full* years," where the Septuagint, literally following the Hebrew, has *δύο ἔτη ἡμερῶν*. Thus difficult do translators find it to avoid both the Scylla and Charybdis of this matter—to preserve strict accuracy, and yet to write in accordance with the genius and laws of their own language.



other of these objects is missed in the Septuagint, as in every other translation ; and as neither the one error nor the other can be proved to have a place in our existing Greek Gospel of St Matthew, we conclude that it is not a translated, but an original work.\*

II. I shall next refer, in support of the proper originality of our existing Gospel, to *the manner in which citations from the Old Testament are made in it.*

St Matthew is rich in quotations from the Old Testament. There are *thirteen* passages quoted from the Pentateuch, some of them oftener than once. There are *nine* citations from the Psalms. There are *sixteen* passages from the prophetic books, eight of these from Isaiah, one from Jeremiah, and seven from the minor prophets. Now, if St Matthew wrote in Hebrew, he would, of course, make his citations directly from the Hebrew text. And if his work was afterwards faithfully translated into Greek, the passages quoted would naturally be given in the form in which they stand in the Hebrew Bible. Such is unquestionably the course which we would expect a scrupulously honest translator to have followed. And if we find any reason to suspect that he tampered with his author in regard to citations, we lose all certainty that he may not have used the same liberty in other respects. The applications of Old Testament statements made

\* *Winer* observes that, as might be expected, Hebrew idioms and expressions appear more markedly in translations made directly from the Hebrew than in works composed originally in Greek by Jewish writers. He appends to this remark the following statement, which I would specially apply to St Matthew's Gospel,—“Hierin liegt zugleich ein wenig beachteter Grund, warum der Text des N. T. nicht als eine (grossentheils ungeschickte) Uebersetzung aus dem Aramäischen betrachtet werden kann.”—*Grammatik des Neut. Sprach.*, p. 26, sixth edit.

in the evangelic narratives necessarily form a most important part of their contents. They often bear upon such essential points as the Messiahship, the divinity, and the vicarious atonement of the Saviour. It is, then, a very serious matter if there be ground to believe that we do not in this Gospel possess the Old Testament quotations, as they were really made by the apostle. If his translator has ventured to change or modify these according to his own judgment or fancy, then, unless it can be proved that he was himself inspired, we have no safeguard whatever against his great and wilful dishonesty. There is indeed one supposition which may be regarded as saving his good faith, although we do find that the quotations, as he has given them, vary from the Hebrew Scriptures. He may have preferred adopting the Septuagint translation, which was already current, to venturing on an independent translation of the apostle's words. This course might have, perhaps, been pardonable. But if he followed it, we would at least expect to find him consistent throughout, and that, by an application of this principle, we could explain all the variations which might appear in our present Gospel from the text of the Hebrew Scriptures.\*

How, then, stands the case ? As every one may see, on examining the Gospel, and comparing the quotations which it contains with the Hebrew original and the Septuagint translation, these are so made that, if our Greek Gospel be a version from the Hebrew, it is utterly impossible to explain them in consistency with the accuracy and fidelity of the translator. In some passages there is an exact verbal accordance with the

\* Comp. above, Part I., Chap. VII., pp. 251-3.

LXX., as in chap. xxi. 16. This is the case at times even when the Greek translation differs to some extent from the Hebrew, as at chap. xix. 5. In other passages, and those by far the most numerous, there is not a literal agreement with the text of the LXX., while its phraseology is nevertheless substantially adopted, as in chap. xv. 8. And there are other passages still, such as chap. xii. 18–20, in which there is not an exact accordance with either the expressions or the apparent meaning of the original statement; but an intensity is imparted by the evangelist to the idea which he desires to bring out, and a somewhat different turn is given to the import of the words from what they appear to have either in the Greek or Hebrew text.\*

Now, how is it possible to explain these various phenomena on the supposition that our present Gospel is a translation? If it be regarded in that light, the utmost caprice appears in the conduct of the translator, and all confidence in his fidelity is destroyed. But if, on the other hand, we look upon our present Greek Gospel of St Matthew, as being the true original work of an inspired apostle, there is no difficulty in accounting for the differences observable in his mode of citation. We can easily conceive, in such a case, that the

\* *Credner* enters very fully, in the second vol. of his "Beiträge," into an examination of the Old Testament quotations which occur in the Gospel of St Matthew; and the result of his investigations is thus repeated in his "Einleitung," § 46,—"*Matthäus citirt frei und hält sich bei der Anführung alttestamentlicher Stellen durchaus an die Griechische Uebersetzung, aber nach einem Texte, welcher bei den messianischen Beweisstellen, und einzig nur bei diesen, mit dem Hebräischen Texte . . . geändert war.*" This hypothesis enables us to explain such a remarkable variation from the current text of the LXX. as occurs at chap. ii. 15.

writer was led, as suited his purpose, to quote exactly from the text of the Old Testament, or to depart less or more from it, according as the Spirit who guided him might direct, and as the apostolic authority which he possessed may be held to have fully sanctioned.

There appears to me, then, a strong and almost irresistible argument for the proper originality of the existing Gospel of St Matthew, in the manner in which quotations from the Old Testament are presented in it. This feeling has been shared by many eminent critics. Professor Hug, for example, remarks that "the Greek dress of the passages from the Old Testament is so managed, that their appearance must be ascribed to the author, and not to any translator."\* Some have even been so deeply impressed with this consideration, as to deem it of itself absolutely conclusive. Thus Guericke declares, after attaching, as I humbly conceive, an exaggerated importance to the statements of antiquity in favour of the Hebrew original,—“Our existing Greek Gospel, however, certainly bears in itself also the sure sign and stamp of originality. This appears especially from the fact that the citations which occur in it from the Old Testament do not harmonise throughout, all and wholly, either with the Hebrew text or with the Septuagint, but are given with so much freedom and peculiarity, that they cannot be regarded as having flowed from a mere translator, nor can be explained on such a supposition.”\*

III. I may now notice, as another corroboration of

\* *Fosdick's* Hug, ii., § 12.

† *Guericke*, “*Isagog.*,” § 14.



the originality of our present Gospel—*those explanations of Hebrew words and phrases which occur in it.*

We read, (chap. i. 23,) “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel ; *which, being interpreted, is, God with us.*” And again, (chap. xxvii. 46,) “And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani ? *that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?*” An obvious difficulty arises from these explanatory clauses, against the hypothesis that the Gospel was originally written in Hebrew. They present the very same forms of expression as do analogous passages in the other Gospels, of which the Greek original is not disputed. Thus we read in St Mark’s Gospel, (chap. xv. 22,) “And they bring him unto the place called Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.” And in St John’s Gospel, (chap. i. 42,) “And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona ; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, A stone.” These passages are exactly similar to those which occur in St Matthew’s Gospel ; and, viewing the first Gospel as being like the others an original composition in Greek, the same reason will account for such explanations occurring in *it* as in the rest. But what shall be said of the clauses in question, on the supposition that our first Gospel is a translation from the Hebrew ? I have noticed three different ways in which the upholders of that opinion seek to account for the clauses under consideration. The first is that of Dr Tregelles, and, so far as I know,

is peculiar to that eminent critic. He says, "It is needless to regard as additions many of those things which have been specified as such : thus, 'they shall call his name Emmanuel ; which, being interpreted, is, God with us :' why should we regard this last clause as an *addition* ? It is not a bare translation, but an authoritative statement, that Emmanuel was not a mere name, signifying only *God is with us*, but a divine declaration that the Lord Jesus was really and truly *God with us*."\* It is thus supposed that the clauses in question existed also in the imagined *Hebrew* original, and are to be regarded as comprising something more than a mere version of the Aramaic words. Every reader will be able to judge for himself of the validity of such an explanation. For my own part, I must, with all deference, confess that it seems to me to border on absurdity. Can any reader of the Gospel imagine that a dogmatic announcement is intended to be made, when he is told respecting the name "Emmanuel," that, *being interpreted*, it is, "God with us," or still less that any point of doctrinal importance is involved, not in the words themselves, but in the mere *explanation* which is given of the words, when he is informed that our Lord exclaimed on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?"

The second account of this matter which may be mentioned is that suggested by Dr Cureton, and is diametrically opposite to the one just considered. While Dr Tregelles imagines that the explanatory clauses under consideration, may have existed also in the fancied Hebrew original, Dr Cureton is doubtful if they have a valid claim to be regarded as forming

\* *Tregelles*, ut sup., p. 37.

genuine portions even of the Greek Gospels in which they occur. Thus, in his remarks on John i. 39, he says, "The explanation in the Greek, ὃ λέγεται μεθερμηνεύμενον Διδάσκαλε, was unnecessary to the Syriac reader, who knew the meaning of the term, and is therefore omitted, *if, indeed, this and similar explanations be not marginal notes which have found their way into the text subsequently to the time when this version was made.*"\* This supposition of the learned writer is opposed by the almost unanimous authority of all existing MSS. and versions, in which the words which he would relegate to the margin continually appear as an integral part of the sacred text. Such is the case even in that Syriac version of St Matthew, which he rates above the Greek, for at chap. i. 23 it reads, "His name shall be called Emmanuel, *which is interpreted, Our God with us.*"

But the third, and by far most common explanation given of the clauses in question by the defenders of the Hebrew original is, that they were inserted by the Greek *translator* of the Gospel for the benefit of his readers, who could not otherwise have guessed the meaning. This is agreeable to common sense, and might not perhaps be deemed beyond the privilege and right belonging to a strictly conscientious translator. But, unfortunately, there are other terms occurring in the Gospel, at least as difficult to be understood as those to which an interpretation is appended, yet left untranslated. Thus every one knows how obscure is the meaning of those expressions *Raca* and *Morè* which occur in the Sermon on the Mount. It is with difficulty even at the present day, that

\* Cureton's Syriac Gospels, p. xlvi.

scholars can agree as to their significance. And if it be supposed that the Gospel of St Matthew was primarily written in Hebrew, and that its Greek translator thought it necessary, when retaining any of its original expressions, to add to these an interpretation, there are no words which could be regarded as more standing in need of such an explanation than those which have been mentioned. This third hypothesis, then, proves equally insufficient with those already considered. The only satisfactory account of the matter is, that St Matthew himself wrote the Gospel in the form in which we still possess it. There can be no doubt, as was formerly noticed, that he had special reference in its publication to the wants of his Jewish countrymen. But there can be as little doubt, I believe, that he also intended his work for the whole world. This appears not only from those explanatory clauses now under consideration, but from passages having a universal reference, (chap. xxvi. 13, xxviii. 17,) which all must admit to have formed part of the Gospel from the first ; and from such explanations of Jewish customs as are occasionally inserted. Thus it would have been evidently absurd to state for the information of Palestinian readers, (chap. xxvii. 15,) that "at the feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner whom they would," and to remark (chap. xxviii. 15) that "this saying is commonly reported amongst the Jews until this day." The Gospel, then, having been intended for others than the Jews of Palestine, could not possibly have been written in Hebrew, but its author having in view Gentile no less than Jewish readers, added the explanations in question, while occasional Aramaic expressions, which had



established themselves in the current Greek of the country, were naturally left untranslated.\*

IV. Several *Latinistic forms* occur in our Greek Gospel which it seems in the highest degree improbable that *a translator from Hebrew into Greek would have adopted*. Thus, at chap. v. 26, we find *κοδράντης*, that is, the Latin *quadrans*; and at chap. xxvii. 26, there occurs *φραγελλώ*, that is, the Latin *flagello*. Now, as Townson has well remarked with respect to the first of these expressions, we may infer from its occurrence that the Greek of this Gospel was the apostle's own. Another, translating it from the Hebrew, for the sake professedly of Greek readers, would have taken the word that was most familiar to the Greeks, and have said *λεπτόν*, as St Luke does, (chap. xii. 59,) when reporting the same statement. Some writers, indeed, who hold that St Matthew wrote at first in Hebrew, appear to imagine that such Latinistic expressions were not adopted by the translator, but had occurred in the original Aramaic of the apostle. Dr Davidson, for example, remarks, "The occurrence of Latin terms in the Gospel of Matthew will be reckoned no presumption that it was translated at Rome, when it is remembered that Matthew, as a tax-gatherer for the Roman government, must have come in contact, by the very nature of his office, with persons using the Latin language."† But it seems very unlikely that if St Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, he would have introduced into it, without any necessity, these Latin expressions. For, as Townson again observes with respect to the use of the Latin

\* Comp. above, Part I., Chap. III., p. 93.

† "Introduction to the New Testament," i., 56.

term *φραγελλώω*, (Matt. xxvii. 26,) "If St Matthew composed his Gospel first in Hebrew, he would not affect to Latinise his own tongue, but would declare the indignity suffered by Christ as He had predicted it, which was certainly by a Hebrew word, when He said, 'They shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify Him.'" This appears quite decisive against those who believe, as Dr Davidson does, that our Lord usually spoke in Hebrew. Certainly, in that case, St Matthew, writing in the same language, would have used the Hebrew term which Christ Himself employed, and would not have had recourse to a foreign tongue. "And who else," adds Townson, "would think of recurring to the Latin, when his business was to turn the Gospel into Greek, if it afforded him a proper term? But *μαστιγοῦν* is employed for scourging as a Roman punishment, both by secular authors and by the evangelists, as St John in the corresponding history, and by St Mark, St Luke, and even St Matthew, in reciting the prediction here mentioned. It seems, then, evident that *φραγελλώω* is not from the hand of a translator, but immediately of St Matthew himself, whose intercourse with the Romans had made a word, which the Greeks did not acknowledge, familiar to him."\* The same remarks will apply to several of the other Latin expressions which occur in this Gospel. Some of them are, no doubt, to be met with under different forms in the Rabbinical Hebrew of later times,† but of others there

\* Townson's "Discourses on the Gospels," i., 172, 173.

† *Κοδράντης*, e.g., is found in the "Talm. Hieros." under the form קרדינטס, and in a different form in the "Talm. Bab." See Buxtorf's "Lexicon," *sub voce*.

is no example to be found except in the Greek New Testament. And I cannot but reckon it very improbable that, had St Matthew written originally in Aramaic, he would so largely have had recourse to such terms, while it is at least equally improbable that a translator of his work, writing professedly for the benefit of Greek readers, would so frequently and needlessly have adopted them.\*

V. Again, every careful reader of the Greek text of St Matthew must have noticed the *very frequent use of the imperfect tense* which occurs in it, and the peculiar delicacy of meaning which is thus oftentimes conveyed. Examples of this usage might be quoted from every chapter, but let the following suffice. At chap. iii. 14, we read of John, with respect to Jesus, when the Saviour sought to be baptized by the hands of His forerunner, that he *διεκώλυεν αὐτὸν*, that is, he not only “*forbade* Him,” as it is in our English version, but rather, bringing out the force both of the preposition and the imperfect, “*he continued earnestly to hinder* Him.” At chap. xiii. 34, we find within the compass of one verse two tenses of the same verb, *λαλέω*, employed with a beauty and precision which should not be overlooked. The evangelist referring to the instructions of Jesus which he had just reported, first uses the historic aorist, *ἐλάλησεν*, “*All these things spake* Jesus unto the multitude in parables;” and then, referring to His customary practice, He employs the imperfect, *ἐλάλει*, “*and without a parable was* He

\* A list of the Latin words occurring in the New Testament is given in *Glassii* “*Philologia Sacra*,” p 152. The following are quoted from Matthew:—*Ἀσάριον*, x. 29; *δηνάριον*, xviii. 28; *κῆνος*, xvii. 25; *κοδράντης*, v. 26; *κουστωδία*, xxvii. 65, 66; *λεγέων*, xxvi. 53; *μίλιον*, v. 41; *μίδιος*, v. 15; *πραιτώριον*, xxvii. 27; *φραγελλοῦν*, xxvii. 26.

not *accustomed* to speak unto them.”\* Again, at chap. xviii. 30, we have a beautiful instance of the use of the imperfect, which is in this case also all the more marked, because it is immediately followed by the aorist. The unmerciful servant was not willing (οὐκ ἤθελεν) to shew compassion to his fellow-servant,—such was his *continuing* state of mind,—but he went out and *cast* him into prison, the tense here employed being the aorist, (ἔβαλεν,) and denoting an action at once definitely accomplished. Now, it is no doubt true that both in Hebrew and Syriac, there is a means of expressing the imperfect by a circumlocution with the substantive verb. But, as might be expected from the want of a proper tense, its use is much less common in these languages than in Greek. Even the Peschito, which is in general so faithful, not unfrequently fails to bring out the delicacy of meaning conveyed by the use of the imperfect in the Gospels. This is the case, for instance, with respect to the passage last referred to in the Greek of St Matthew. Both the imperfect and aorist are at xviii. 30 represented by the preterite in the Syriac version.† We may regard it, therefore, as in the highest degree improbable that, had the evangelist written his Gospel at first in a dialect of Hebrew, we should have found the imperfect tense so often and so appropriately employed, as it is in the

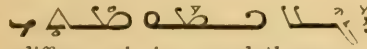
\* This precision is lost in the English version by the use of *spake* in both clauses, and is in general unnoticed by commentators. Difficulties have, therefore, needlessly been found in the verse. Comp. *Alexander* on St Matthew's Gospel, p. 370.

† Οὐκ ἤθελεν is rendered in Pesch. by ܐܠܝܢܐ ܡܥܬܐ, and in the Syriac version, published by Dr Cureton, by a paraphrastic translation, in which the force of the imperfect in Greek is also lost. In the other two passages cited above, the imperfect is preserved by the Peschito in both cases; by the Curetonian only in the second.



Greek,—whence we again conclude, that this is no translation, but proceeded immediately from the pen of the apostle.

VI. Finally, it may, in my humble judgment, be urged as a strong proof of the proper originality of the Greek Gospel of St Matthew, that *unusual expressions* occur in it which could not have been given in Hebrew, or in the cognate dialects, *except by means of a circumlocution*. Thus, at chap. v. 33, we find the verb ἐπιορκέω employed to denote the complex idea of *swearing falsely*. There is no answering expression to this in the Hebrew or the Syriac. The Peschito renders the single Greek verb by two separate words, “Thou shalt not *be false in thine oaths*,”\* the Syriac of Cureton has “Thou shalt not *swear an oath of lying*.” The same is to be observed at chap. xix. 28, with respect to the striking term παλιγγενεσία. The amalgamated idea contained in this single Greek word could be expressed only by two or more in Hebrew or Syriac. We find, accordingly, that the Peschito and Curetonian Syriac, while differing somewhat in their renderings, both agree in breaking up the one compound Greek term, and in seeking to convey its meaning by separate simple words. Now, the repeated occurrence of such cases† appears plainly enough to indicate that our Greek Gospel is an original work. It is hardly conceivable that any translator should

\*  ; the Curetonian is still more diffuse, as is, in general, the case.

† In addition to the above-mentioned passages, the reader may compare with the Syriac texts the Greek terms, ἀποστάσιον, v. 31; πυρέσσουσαν, viii. 14; οἰκιακοί, x. 36; παρακούση, xviii. 17; εὐνουχίσθησαν, xix. 12, &c. : in all which passages there is a conciseness in the Greek which is *necessarily* wanting in the Syriac.

have condensed the more diffuse expressions of his original into the uncommon Greek terms which have been quoted. The tendency of every translator is much rather towards expansion than condensation. This is one of the necessities attending such a work, and will be found characteristic of every known translation. As then has been inferred regarding the Epistle to the Hebrews, that it must in its present form be an original work, from its containing Greek expressions which could only be expressed by a circumlocution in Hebrew,\* so, for the same reason, we may conclude, respecting our Greek Gospel of St Matthew, that it is an original and not a translated work.

Altogether, it seems impossible to demonstrate *any* work to be original, if that has not been done with respect to our present Gospel of St Matthew. Every internal characteristic points, as we have seen, to that conclusion. The general character of the work—the manner in which citations occur in it—the several special features which may be marked in its structure and phraseology—all combine in furnishing evidence of its originality, which it seems hardly possible to resist. It will be strange indeed if a work thus clearly shewn on internal grounds to be original, should be destitute of external evidence to the same effect. We shall in the following chapter inquire whether or not that is the case. Meantime, I feel justified in saying, after the evidence which has already been adduced, that, for my own part, I should as soon be persuaded to believe that the *Æneid* of Virgil came not, in its present Latin dress, from the hands of its author, or

\* Comp. *Guericke*, "Neut. Isag.," § 25, or *Davidson's* "Introduction," vol. iii., 285, &c., for a full illustration of the argument.

that the *Paradise Lost* was really stolen by Milton from a poem in another language, as that our present Greek Gospel of St Matthew issued not, in the form in which we now possess it, from the hands of the apostle whose name it bears.

### CHAPTER III.

#### EXTERNAL EVIDENCE OF THE ORIGINALITY OF THE EXISTING GREEK GOSPEL OF ST MATTHEW.

IF we were to judge by the assertions which some of the defenders of the Hebrew original have made on this point, we should here feel ourselves utterly helpless. According to them, there is *no* external evidence that St Matthew wrote a Gospel at all, unless it be admitted that he wrote in Hebrew. Thus says Dr Tregelles, "On what ground do we believe that St Matthew wrote a Gospel at all? Because we learn it from ancient and competent witnesses. But the same witnesses affirm that he wrote in Hebrew; and if endeavours be made to cast doubt on *this part* of their testimony, the whole (to say the least) is weakened."\*

Such statements occur very frequently in the writings of Dr Tregelles, but with all due deference to his well-earned reputation as a biblical scholar, I have no hesitation in saying that they are utterly without foundation. So far are they from giving a true account of the state of the case, that I propose in this chapter to prove all for which we need care in connexion with St Matthew's Gospel, *without referring to*

\* Ut sup., p. 19.



*any of the witnesses for the Hebrew original at all.* I do so, however, with a protest against the unfairness of the course to which Dr Tregelles endeavours to shut up the maintainers of the Greek original. It is plain from the language which he employs, that he too is not indisposed, when occasion serves, to adopt the *in terrorem* style of argument. As was remarked in a previous chapter, there has been a too great looking at consequences by those who have argued for our present Gospel as a true original; and I there heartily joined with Dr Tregelles in condemning the habit of being influenced by such considerations. But it is here evident that he exposes *himself*, though on other grounds, to the same condemnation. He attempts to frighten us from assigning their true historical value to the words of Papias and others, by declaring that, if we should in any measure discredit them, the consequences will be disastrous. We dare not, as he puts it, question the correctness of these writers on *one point*, lest we destroy their general trustworthiness, and thus invalidate the authority on which other important conclusions rest. Now, I strongly protest against being fettered in this manner. We ought to hold ourselves at perfect liberty to use the statements of the fathers just as we do those of other ancient writers. We may, and *must*, discard all that we find in them which can be proved inconsistent with other known facts, and yet, at the same time, we may gratefully make use of them as positive witnesses to what there is otherwise no ground to question. No reason can be alleged why we should refuse to accept the statement of Papias, that St Matthew was *the writer of a Gospel*. And we may surely receive his testi-

mony to that fact, without being compelled also to believe, on his authority, that the Gospel in question was written in *Hebrew*. It is utterly unphilosophical to demand, that, if we refer to him at all, we must submit to his assertions or opinions on every point connected with the subject. *Totally accept*, or *totally reject*, cannot with any fairness be urged as the rule which is binding in such a matter. It is not the rule adopted with respect to the declarations of other ancient writers ; and it is manifestly not the rule by an application of which any question that rests upon historic evidence can ever be settled.

Who shall demand, for instance, that we must either accept or reject, *in toto*, the statements contained in the first book of Livy's Roman history ? Are we bound to deny that there ever was such a man as Romulus, if we refuse to believe the marvellous incidents which have been recorded of his birth and death ? And may we not fully credit the general opinion that Numa Pompilius was a wise and sagacious prince without believing that he acted under supernatural direction ? May we not accept those statements of Livy which appear to be of a true historical character, without, at the same time, admitting all the legendary and mythical stories by which they are accompanied ? The notion to the contrary is preposterous, and yet it is substantially this doctrine which Dr Tregelles lays down with respect to Papias and other ancient ecclesiastical writers. We must receive *everything* which they tell us, else we can avail ourselves of *nothing*. We must admit on their authority that St Matthew wrote in Hebrew, or incur the penalty of not being able to learn from them that

St Matthew wrote at all.\* This is much the same as if we should be told that, unless we acknowledge with Tacitus that Christianity is an *exitiabilis superstitio*, we can make no use of that historian's statement, that our religion arose in Judæa in the reign of Tiberius, and that its Author bore the name of Christ. If this plan of dealing with ancient testimony were adopted, we might abandon as vain, all attempts to distinguish between fact and fable, or to construct for ourselves, from the records of the past, a trustworthy account, either of human opinions or achievements.

I hold, then, that the maintainers of the Greek original are perfectly entitled, if they choose, to avail themselves of the testimony of Irenæus, Papias, and others, to the effect that St Matthew *did* write a Gospel, although they reject the statements of these writers as to the *language* in which that Gospel was composed. There may be no reason whatever for questioning the one statement, but every reason for receiving it. There may be, and, as we have seen, there *is*, the plainest necessity for rejecting the other.

But to prove how groundless is Dr Tregelles' allegation, I purpose, as has been said, to dispense entirely with the aid of the authors usually quoted in support of the Hebrew original, and, independently of these, to shew that we have external evidence that St Matthew wrote our present Greek Gospel. I shall first bring forward evidence of the *authority*, and then of the *authorship*; shewing that it may both be proved that the Greek Gospel we now possess, was always

\* The language of *Dr Tregelles* on this point is echoed by the writer in the *Edin. Review*, already referred to, July 1859, pp. 184, 185.

esteemed part of inspired Scripture, and that it was invariably attributed to the apostle Matthew.

In reference to the first point, I cannot do better than quote a passage from Dr Tregelles himself. He says, "Even if we look at the Greek copy of Matthew *by itself*, we see that it must belong to *the apostolic age*. The line of early writers who cite and use it, carry us back in the same way as they do with regard to Mark, Luke, and John. The language, too, shews its origin as plainly as does that of the other three Gospels. . . . As to the canonical authority of the Greek Gospel which we possess, no further proof need, I believe, be given ; we have the same evidence for this Greek translation which we possess for the original documents written by Mark, Luke, and John. All four were used together by the Church from the earliest days ; all four have the same sanction." \*

We could not desire more than this with regard to the position of authority assigned to our present Greek Gospel. It has been transmitted to us as canonical scripture from the earliest times. We can trace it to the apostolic age. It occupies exactly the same footing as the other acknowledged books of the New Testament. All this Dr Tregelles contends for in regard to our *Greek Gospel viewed by itself*, and yet he maintains the somewhat paradoxical position, that if we deny that St Matthew wrote in Hebrew, we have no proof that he wrote at all !

We *have* proof at least that the Greek Gospel which goes under his name is an apostolic and inspired document. That much, it is granted, may be proved independently of the statements made as to its Hebrew

\* *Tregelles*, ut sup., p. 34.



origin. Papias, the first writer who speaks of the Hebrew Gospel, does not carry us quite to the apostolic age, and would not be sufficient to bear out the claims of our Greek Gospel, as these are stated above by Dr Tregelles. But beyond him, we can appeal to Polycarp and Ignatius, who both contain evident quotations from the Greek Gospel which we now possess.\* Its authenticity, then, as canonical scripture, is clearly and confessedly established, without the slightest aid being derived from those ancient writers that speak of its Hebrew original.

And, next, as to its authorship. Here, too, we have the most satisfactory evidence without calling upon any of the assertors of the Hebrew original to bear their testimony. This Greek Gospel of ours, acknowledged to be, in its present form, apostolic, has always, in that form, borne the name of St Matthew. There is not a whisper in all antiquity of any rival claimant. In every existing manuscript, the most ancient as well as the most modern, the same name appears on its front. It is Matthew always, and Matthew only. The same thing holds with respect to every version of the New Testament, ancient or modern. One name is always prefixed as that of the human author of this portion of Scripture. It is continually announced as the work of the apostle Matthew. This is especially distinct in the most ancient version of all, the Peschito, which, as abundant evidence proves, must have been formed not later than the second century.†

\* See the passages fully considered in *Lardner's* "Credibility," &c., or in *Jones* "On the Canon;" and, more or less fully, in the ordinary Introductions to the New Testament.

† The extreme antiquity of the Syriac Peschito version is to my mind unquestionable. Attempts have indeed been made to render

In this truly venerable and admirable translation, which thus approaches the apostolic age, if indeed it does not completely reach it, the title of the first Gospel is, "*The Holy Gospel, the preaching of Matthew the Apostle.*"\* It will be observed that, in this inscription, there is no room left for those doubts which have sometimes been expressed with regard to the titles of this and the other Gospels, as they usually stand in the ancient MSS. It has, unreasonably I think, been doubted whether the common form, *κατὰ Ματθαίου*, can be held to denote true authorship. But in the title prefixed to this Gospel in the Peschito, all such ambiguity is precluded. It can only be interpreted as implying that the first Gospel proceeded from the pen of the apostle, that it was *his* in the strict sense of being his proper authentic production. And thus, as it is almost universally admitted, and indeed cannot without contradicting the clearest evidence be denied, that the Peschito version was made directly from the Greek, we have the surest testimony both to the apostolic antiquity of our existing Gospel of St Matthew and to the fact, that, from the very first, it

this point doubtful, but in vain. The single fact that this version did not originally contain those books of the New Testament which were for a time doubted of, is sufficient evidence of its high antiquity. *Marsh* assigns it to the middle of the second century, while *Michaelis* places it even in the first. See a very complete and satisfactory argument in behalf of its almost apostolic antiquity in *Jones* "On the Canon," i., 86-107.

\* The authority of such a statement is manifestly different from that which belongs to those which occur at the *end* of the Gospels. A *title* must have existed from the first, so that the words above quoted are, in all probability, to be ascribed to one almost contemporary with the apostles, while, as has been remarked, "these *postscripts* are not the testimonies of the translators. They proceed merely from the conjecture of some transcriber, but when written, or by whom, is equally unknown."—*Campbell's Preface to St Mark's Gospel*, § 4.

was attributed to that apostle. Are we not then justified in styling the statements of Dr Tregelles, on this point, without foundation? By a chain of the clearest testimony, we can demonstrate both the authority and the authorship of our first Gospel, without once referring to those fathers who assert its Hebrew original. How groundless then the allegation which Dr Tregelles is so fond of making, "that if there is *any* evidence that St Matthew wrote a Gospel at all, it is proved that he wrote it in what was then called Hebrew!"\* And may not even a somewhat stronger epithet be applied to such language as the following, which he is fond also of repeating? He says, "Suppose it could be shewn that we have no sufficient proof that St Matthew wrote in Hebrew, would it follow that he must have written in Greek? This has been assumed by the advocates for a Greek original, but in fact if we get rid of early testimony, we are quite left in the dark as to the language. Why should not a claim be put in for other tongues besides Greek? Why not Latin or Coptic, &c.?"†

The zeal of the learned writer seems here to betray him into such utter recklessness as carries in itself its own refutation. And I cannot but observe that it is a complete misrepresentation to insinuate, as he does, respecting the defenders of the Greek original, that it is either their wish or endeavour to "*get rid of early testimony.*" No such thing. They neither undervalue, nor do they, in fact, abandon it. They simply appeal from its mistakes to the evidence of unquestionable facts. And they gratefully accept of it and

\* *Journal of Sacred Literature*, January 1859, p. 410.

† "On the Original Language of St Matthew's Gospel," p. 19.

follow it, so far as it is not proved either self-contradictory, or opposed to what is otherwise indisputable. They gladly welcome all its statements, but they expect not to find these unmixed with error. They think themselves justified in sifting and trying all the declarations of the fathers by the principles of historical criticism, just as they do those of other ancient writers. To treat them otherwise is not, in truth, to yield them a becoming respect, but to be guilty towards them of a childish superstition. There is nothing peculiarly sacred in their character as witness-bearers; they have no special claim to infallibility. And as we scruple not to convict of error a Thucydides or Tacitus in particular statements which they make, while at the same time we by no means slight or question their general testimony, so we are not to be accused of setting aside or seeking to disparage the testimony of the ancient fathers simply because we refuse to pin our faith to every assertion which they make, and will not shut our eyes to the evidence of other undoubted facts in order that we may quietly rest in every one of their conclusions.\*

Now, as will be shewn in the following chapter, there is some amount of obvious error involved in the

\* The mode in which the reproach above noticed is sometimes cast at the defenders of the Greek original almost amounts to silliness. Thus says the writer in the *Edin. Review*, (ut sup., p. 188,) in reference to *Dr Cureton's* hypothesis respecting our first Gospel,—“To all biblical scholars who prefer objective facts to subjective visions, who regard the testimony of ancients that St Matthew *did* write in Hebrew, more highly than the peremptory assertion of moderns that he did *not*, do we commend the consideration of the subject.” I simply ask, Are the phenomena which have been pointed out in the Gospel itself mere “subjective visions?” If so, how would this writer prove the *Greek* original of the Epistle to the Hebrews in opposition to the statements of ancient writers on the subject?



statement made by Papias, respecting St Matthew's Gospel. But while believing that this can be fully proved, I still hold that there is a certain value in his declaration. It may unquestionably be regarded as a positive testimony to the fact that St Matthew *did* write a Gospel. That truth remains after all the error contained in the statement has been set aside; and while we receive not the whole as pure uncorrupted truth, we may yet rejoice to find in it something which is really valuable, and are not called to reject the whole as absolutely and entirely without foundation.

Let us accept, then, on this as on other points, every declaration of antiquity which stubborn and resistless facts do not compel us to question. And acting thus, we find that by successive links of such testimony as there *is no cause* to question, we are able to trace up our existing Greek Gospel of St Matthew to the very verge of the apostolic age, discover that it was always esteemed part of canonical scripture, was quoted as the inspired and infallible word of God, and was with unanimous voice attributed to the author whose name it still bears.

So far, therefore, from admitting that there is any force in the allegation so frequently made, that, unless we believe St Matthew to have written in Hebrew, we have no proof that he ever wrote at all, I should be inclined to lay down the exactly counter-proposition. Supposing it were impossible to prove his authorship as regards the *Greek* Gospel, which is now, and always has been, in the hands of the Church, then I maintain that, judging of the matter by the most rigorous principles of historical criticism, it would be impossible to prove that he ever wrote a Gospel at all. For what,

on these principles, is *necessary* to make good the assertion that he did write in Hebrew, and what then appears the value of that evidence which is actually *producible* in support of that alleged fact? Let us answer the first of these questions, in the following words of a very able writer, and we shall not experience much difficulty in disposing of the second. "Historical evidence," says Sir G. C. Lewis, "like judicial evidence, is founded on the testimony of credible witnesses. Unless these witnesses had personal or immediate perception of the facts which they report; unless they saw or heard what they undertake to relate as having happened, their evidence is not entitled to credit. As all original witnesses must be contemporary with the events which they attest, it is a necessary condition for the credibility of a witness, that he be a contemporary, though a contemporary is not necessarily a credible witness. Unless, therefore, a historical account can be traced by probable proof to the testimony of contemporaries, the first condition of historical credibility fails." \*

Now, it humbly appears to me that, not without some difficulty, will the upholders of the Hebrew original be able to shew that any one of their witnesses fulfils these conditions. Papias is the first who speaks of the Hebrew Gospel, and he certainly was not contemporary with the apostle Matthew. Nor does he affirm that he ever *saw* the Gospel in question. He simply makes a statement which, whether originating with himself or derived from another, at once appears opposed to other indisputable evidence. He tells us that St Matthew wrote in Hebrew, but the Greek

\* "Credibility of Early Roman History," vol. i., p. 15.

Gospel which we possess under that apostle's name immediately rises up to contradict that assertion. And none of the subsequent writers quoted in support of the Hebrew original declare positively and unambiguously that they had ever seen that document. If, then, we had no Greek Gospel of St Matthew at the present day, and none of that abundant evidence which we possess that the fathers were intimately acquainted with it, I venture to maintain that, in spite of all which is said by the ancients in regard to the Hebrew writing, it would be impossible to make out, on the strictest principles of historical inquiry, that St Matthew *ever wrote a Gospel at all*. All the irrefragable proof of that fact gathers round our existing *Greek Gospel*. Evidence which cannot be questioned of the authorship by St Matthew, is found, as we have seen, in the most ancient MSS., the most venerable versions, and the unbroken chain of quotations from, and references to, his Greek Gospel, which carry us up to the very verge of the apostolic age.

Here I might safely stop ; but, at the risk of parting company with some who have hitherto admitted the validity of the argument, I cannot help advancing a step further. I am firmly convinced that the Greek Gospel of St Matthew, as well as the other two synoptical Gospels, possesses direct *apostolic* sanction. It appears to me certain, from a careful examination of the evidence, both internal and external, that the apostle John *saw* the other three Gospels before writing his own, and that by the nature of his own work he has implicitly and intentionally *sanctioned* those of the three other evangelists.

I am well aware that this is strongly controverted

by some modern critics. But on looking into the Gospel of St John, the evidence appears to me plain and irresistible. On no other supposition, I believe, can we give any possible account of the special character which that Gospel possesses. The apostle manifestly did not write for the purpose of furnishing us with a full history of the life of Christ, for many of the most important facts are altogether omitted, and, in not a few instances, these are presupposed as already well known. He takes no notice of the birth, the baptism, the transfiguration, and many of the miracles of Christ recorded by the other evangelists ; while, at the same time, he assumes these things as quite familiar to his readers. Thus, in chap. i. 32, there is a reference to the baptism of Christ, as reported by Matthew and Luke. In chap. ii. 1, the mother of Jesus is mentioned as a well-known person, although John himself has not previously noticed her. At chap. iii. 24, a parenthetical clause is inserted, apparently to guard against an error which might have arisen from the narrative of Matthew respecting the Baptist. And at chap. xx. 1, the *stone* at the grave of Jesus is referred to, although John has not previously mentioned it ; he says of the women, that they saw “the stone taken away,” evidently supposing that his readers had learned from the other evangelists, regarding the tomb of Jesus, what he himself specially mentions of that of Lazarus, that “it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.”

The question then arises how St John could have written in this manner,—on what ground he based the assumption which he so manifestly makes, that both the facts which he has entirely omitted and those to which he merely alludes were quite familiar



to his readers. Various opinions have been entertained on this subject. Eichhorn imagines, of course, that the apostle wrote with an eye to the Urevangelium, and with the view of supplying its deficiencies. Lücke, Bleek, and Alford suppose that he took for granted the commonly-received oral accounts. De Wette, again, says that St John not only presupposed oral traditions, but also most probably the existence of, at least, *the Greek Gospel of St Matthew*.

And with this latter view, external testimony is coincident. I know of no reason why the statements of the ancient fathers on this point should be rejected. They are, no doubt, mixed up with errors ; but, after these have been set aside, (and *errors* plainly demonstrated to be such are all in ancient testimony that I would *ever* set aside,) there seems to remain substantial and satisfactory evidence to the fact, that St John saw the first three Gospels before writing his own. There are, as Hug has remarked, "internal evidences in the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, that they were antecedent to the Gospel of John ; and there are references in the latter which shew that the writer was acquainted with the contents of the three other Gospels. Now, if the declarations of ancient writers coincide with this conclusion, they do not deserve to be so summarily rejected as they have been."\* And, as has been remarked, the external is, on this point, in perfect harmony with the internal evidence. Indubitable facts as to the lengthened period to which the apostle John was spared upon the earth, and express testimonies of ancient writers as to the object which he had in view in writing his Gospel, tend to confirm

\* "Introduction," ii., § 55.

the opinion which we derive from an inspection of the work itself. "The beloved disciple," says Dr Wordsworth, "was providentially preserved to a great old age, not only to refute the heretics who denied the Lord that bought them, and to convince us of the divinity of the *uncreated Word*, who was in the beginning with God, but also to *complete* the witness of the written *word*, and to vindicate its inspiration from the forgeries of false teachers, and to assure us of its fulness and divine character. In confirmation of this assertion, let us now refer to a fact attested by ancient and unexceptionable witnesses, (Clem. Al., apud Eus., vi., 14 ; Eus., iii., 24, &c.) Towards the close of his long life, copies of the three Gospels of St Matthew, St Mark, and St Luke, which, at that time, we are informed, had been diffused throughout Christendom, were publicly brought to St John in the city of Ephesus, of which he was the metropolitan, by some of the bishops of the Asiatic churches ; and, in their presence, St John openly acknowledged these three Gospels as inspired, and at their request composed his own Gospel, in order to *complete* the evangelical record of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ." \*

Such, I believe, is the conclusion to which all evidence leads on the point in question. But that conclusion has, nevertheless, been strongly controverted. Dean Alford, for example, takes a view exactly opposite to that stated above. I have said that, unless it be supposed that John knew of the other Gospels, no account can be given of the peculiar character attaching to his own ; Alford, on the contrary, believes that,

\* *Wordsworth* on Inspiration, p. 169. Compare *Ellicott's* "Historical Lectures on the Life of Christ," p. 15, n.

“on such a supposition, the phenomena presented by his Gospel would be wholly inexplicable.” He grounds this opinion on those parts which this Gospel has in common with the other three. “And though,” he remarks, “these are not so considerable in extent as in the case of the three Gospels, yet they are quite important enough to decide this question.”\* But it should be noticed that, in every part of the history in which John goes over the same ground with the other evangelists, it is with quite a different purpose from theirs, and with the view of giving prominence to different incidents. Take, for example, chap. xiii., and compare it with the parallel passages in the other Gospels. Does it not manifestly take these for granted, inasmuch as it entirely omits all mention of the Eucharist, and leads us to contemplate the whole scene, as it were, from a different standpoint? And is not this quite in harmony with the opinion that the writer was acquainted with the other Gospels, and had it in his view to supplement them?

John, then, saw and sanctioned the other Gospels. Of that, both on internal and external grounds, there is every reason to be convinced. And thus, passing beyond Papias, the most ancient authority to whom the advocates of the Hebrew original can appeal, we carry our cause into the very presence of the beloved disciple. We ask the aged and venerable John, who has survived all his brethren in the apostleship, what testimony *he* bears respecting those Gospels which had already been given to the Church. And, in answer, he points to that inestimably precious work, which, as supplementary to these, he left as his great memorial to all com-

\* *Alford's "Greek Test.,"* vol. i., p. 56.

ing generations. In his own Gospel he sets his seal upon those which had preceded it; he proceeds on the supposition that they are truthful and infallible records; and thus he affixes to all the three the stamp of his apostolic authority, and to the Greek of St Matthew among the rest.



## CHAPTER IV.

### STATEMENTS OF ANCIENT WRITERS IN SUPPORT OF THE HEBREW ORIGINAL OF ST MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

WE have seen that our present Greek Gospel of St Matthew has been quoted as inspired Scripture from the apostolic age, and that it has always been attributed to the person whose name it now bears. We have also seen that there is demonstrative evidence in the Gospel itself, that it is an original, and not a translated work—coming as certainly in its present form from the hands of St Matthew as the other two synoptical Gospels issued in their present form from the hands of St Mark and St Luke.

If these points have been established, as I believe, on grounds which cannot be set aside, the hostile assertions of either ancient or modern writers need cause us very little trouble. Facts, once ascertained, remain *facts*, however much they may be mistaken or controverted; and it matters nothing how weighty may be the authorities that question them, or how numerous the writers who contradict them. No one, for example, thinks it worth while, at the present day, elaborately to refute the assertions of early heathen writers respecting the manner in which the worship

of the primitive Christians was conducted. Though Tacitus evidently believed the stories in circulation on this point, and lent them the sanction of his great name,\* the facts of the case are too well known to us from other sources, to allow these assertions, numerous as they are, and weighty as is the authority of some that make them, to produce any impression upon our minds. The most that we deem it necessary to do is to give some probable explanation of the manner in which they may have arisen. And whether we succeed in effecting this or not, the conclusion already formed as to their erroneousness cannot be shaken. That rests on independent and irrefragable evidence. It is implied in all that proves Christianity to be from God ; and, as long as that fact is admitted, it is rather a curious question about the vagaries to which the

\* In the well-known chapter (Annal., xv., 44) in which he says of the Christians that they were “*per flagitia invisī* ;” and, while acquitting them of the particular crime of setting fire to the city, with which Nero, for purposes of his own, had charged them, nevertheless brands them as being distinguished for their “*general hatred of mankind*”—“*odio humani generis*.” In illustration of these expressions of the Roman historian, Brotier remarks : “*Crimini datum, quod seditiosi, jamque repressi, rursus erumperent, eā superstitione imbuti, quæ deos, terrarum dominos, imperii secundarumque rerum auctores non modo non veneraretur, sed impiis etiam dictiteriis lacesseret : quæ deorum cultores, morte dignos, æternisque ignibus devovendos, furioso generis humani odio pronuntiaret : dum ipsi per flagitia invisī, publicos optimosque mores aversati, soli mortalium, nec templa, nec aras, nec sacrificia haberent ; secretos tantum et legibus prohibitos, conventus nocturnos frequentarent ; in quibus fœdarentur horrendis impudicitiarum spurcitiis, Thyestæisque pascerentur dapibus.*”

These horrible accusations had manifestly arisen from some confused and erroneous reports respecting Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which had found their way in among the heathen, and which, being once set in motion, were taken up by one after another. Thus readily are false statements propagated, and even rise at times to the dignity of history, when they are made with respect to matters which of necessity were at first ill understood.

human mind is liable, than any inquiry of moment to us as Christians, while we seek to trace to their origin these mistakes of heathen writers.

And so with regard to the passages usually quoted from the fathers, in opposition to the proper originality of our Greek Gospel of St Matthew. If that point has already been made out by evidence of its own which is completely sufficient, we have simply to offer some possible explanation of the counter-statements that have been made upon the subject. And whether we succeed in shewing these statements to be in themselves palpable errors, or to be the fruit and consequence of other errors ; or whether we fail in revealing such as their true character, in either case the *fact* already proved will remain as certain and immovable as ever.\*

Unless therefore, that reasoning can be impugned, by which I have endeavoured in the preceding chapters to evince the true originality of our existing Greek Gospel, the utmost that any testimonies from the fathers can possibly prove is, that St Matthew wrote in *Hebrew* AS WELL AS Greek. However numer-

\* Dr Tregelles lays down the following somewhat singular logical canon as necessary to be observed by all those who adopt the view here taken of the question under discussion. "To maintain," he says, (ut sup., p. 10,) "the Greek original, there ought to be, 1st, a refutation of the evidence advanced in favour of the Hebrew ; 2d, at least equal evidence in favour of the Greek ; and, 3d, a proof that such evidence is equally congruent with the facts of the case." I have willingly assumed the *onus probandi* in the controversy, but could scarcely be expected to do that, and at the same time begin by a refutation of the arguments employed on the opposite side. As to the congruity of St Matthew having written in *Greek*, with the fact that his Gospel was intended specially for the natives of Palestine, (to which, I suppose, Dr Tregelles refers,) I leave the evidence, already brought forward to prove the prevalence of Greek in that country, to speak for itself.

ous and strong these testimonies may be, they cannot *exclude* the originality of the Greek, unless the arguments already brought forward in its favour have first been answered. As was formerly remarked, and as will afterwards be more particularly noticed, some have felt the patristic evidence in support of the Hebrew original so strong as to deem it equivalent to that which exists in favour of the Greek, and have therefore adopted the hypothesis of a twofold original. For my own part, I cannot allow it any such importance. It seems to me of a *nature*, whatever its amount, on which no certain dependence can be placed ; and in giving my reasons for thus judging, I beg the reader's attention to one or two general observations on the statements to be found in the writings of the fathers, before proceeding to consider the chief of these in their several parts.

It must of necessity be admitted by all, that the early ecclesiastical writers are very often clearly in error on points such as that now before us. Thus, we have already seen Eusebius maintaining that the apostles naturally understood no language except Syriac, and Chrysostom declaring that the apostle Paul was acquainted only with Hebrew.\* And in a question still more analogous to that now under discussion, we find the early fathers both of the Eastern and Western Churches, decidedly affirming the *Hebrew* original of the Epistle to the Hebrews. This opinion ruled in the Church until the science of biblical criticism awoke at the epoch of the Reformation, when the notion sanctioned by so many ancient authorities was proved untenable, and is now universally abandoned.

\* See above, pp. 22, 146.



We must, then, beware of attaching to those statements which occur in the fathers, respecting the original language of St Matthew's Gospel, any *immediate* critical value. As in every like case, they must be tested and estimated by other extant evidence. And the mere *number* of those who make such statements cannot be held of itself to prove them accurate. If it is admitted that the assertions of Jerome, Euthalius, Eusebius, and others respecting the original language of the Epistle to the Hebrews, are unquestionably erroneous, then the uncertain character of such testimony is acknowledged, and the statements of other fathers respecting St Matthew's Gospel, cannot, as a matter of course, be regarded as conclusive.\* Their real critical worth must be considered. We must examine the circumstances in which they originated, the form in which they appear, the character of the persons who make them, and their consistency with other undoubted facts; and, in now proceeding to do this with respect to the well-known passages, in the most ancient fathers, which bear upon the question before us, I venture to affirm that there is not one of them but may be shewn to be either absurd, ambiguous, doubtful in point of authority, or contradictory to other declarations of the writer in which it is found.

Beginning, then, with the famous saying of Papias, preserved by Eusebius, (Eccl. Hist., iii., 39,) we find it

\* "Utor permisso, caudæque pilos ut equinæ  
Paulatim vello; et demo unum, demo etiam unum;  
Dum cadat elusus ratione ruentis acervi  
Qui redit ad fastos, et virtutem æstimat annis,  
Miraturque nihil nisi quod Libitina sacrauit."

—Hor., Ep., lib. ii., 45, seq.

stated that "Matthew wrote the oracles in the Hebrew dialect, and each one interpreted them as well as he could." \* This is the very corner-stone in the argument of those who plead for the Hebrew original. Papias was Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, in the early part of the second century, and is thus a witness of undoubted antiquity. But we must receive all that he says with caution, for the very writer who has conveyed to us an acquaintance with some of his sentiments, does so with the accompanying statement that he was *σφόδρα σμικρὸς τὸν νοῦν*, "a man of very little understanding." And there is enough in the specimens which the historian has preserved of his opinions to shew us that this judgment was just. Some very foolish stories are reported by Eusebius (*loc. cit.*) as having been credited by Papias, and some very silly notions are ascribed to him ; but, without spending time in referring particularly to these, we may restrict ourselves to the statement more immediately before us, and we shall find, even in it, evidence sufficiently plain, of the weakness of his understanding.

For, let us endeavour to attach any common-sense meaning to the words which have been quoted, and we shall find that impossible. We may admit that *λόγια* means the *whole* Gospel-narrative, and not merely a collection of our Lord's *discourses*, as some writers

\* *Ματθαῖος μὲν οὖν Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ τὰ λόγια συνετάξατο· ἡρμήνευσε δ' αὐτὰ ὡς ἡδύνατο* (or, *ἣν δύνατός*) *ἕκαστος*. It is impossible to say with any certainty, from the manner in which these words are reported by Eusebius, whether they are to be (mediately) ascribed to John the presbyter or not. But, even although inclined to think that they are, we cannot tell how much the original statement may have been misunderstood or supplemented, and must practically deal with them as the words of Papias. Comp. on this point the remarks of *Hug*, "Introd," ii., § 8.

have supposed ;\* a point which must be granted before the words of Papias can be turned to any good account by the supporters of the Hebrew original of our existing Greek Gospel. But, then, what shall we make of *ἐκαστος* ? “*Every one*,” says Papias, “translated the Hebrew Gospel to the best of his ability ;” and of *whom* is this statement made ? does it refer to Jews or Gentiles ? If to Jews, then why did they translate this Gospel, when, *ex hypothesi*, it was written for them in their own language, just that they might need no translation ? And if, on the other hand, *ἐκαστος* be regarded as referring to Gentiles, then, how did it come to pass that they were *able* to translate the Hebrew document in question ? Is it not a well understood fact, that so rare was an acquaintance with that language in ancient times, that very few even of the teachers of the Church could read it ? Papias himself, in all probability, did not know a word of Hebrew ; and, in that respect at least, he was not inferior to the great majority of his fellow-Christians. But where, then, the “every one” who translated for himself this supposed Hebrew Gospel ? In what country, and among what class, shall we seek for those who were both qualified, and found it necessary, to translate the Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew into a language with

\* Comp. *Credner*, “Einl.,” § 45, and *Schleiermacher* in “*Studien und Kritiken*,” 1832, p. 735, &c. With regard to the term *ἠρμήνευσε*, there seems no reason to doubt that it means *translated* ; and the aorist may perhaps be held to indicate that Papias himself possessed our Gospel of St Matthew in *Greek*. He speaks of the time for “every one” translating as past ; and this seems to imply that he and his contemporaries felt no need for such translations. But although his words may warrant this inference, they furnish no hint (as *Thiersch* and others have argued) that the *apostle himself* published a Greek translation of his work.

which they were better acquainted? The only definite answer which I have observed given to these questions is the following by Dr Davidson :—"Those who had the Aramæan document in their hands endeavoured, as well as they could, to ascertain its meaning; which, *they being Greeks*, (for *ἕκαστος* must be restricted to persons to whom, like Papias himself, the Hebrew was not vernacular,) best did by translating it to themselves."\*

The *every one*, then, of Papias is to be sought for only among the GREEKS. That being the case, there are several questions to be asked, which, if I mistake not, it will be found somewhat difficult to answer. First, What reason is there to think that a knowledge of Hebrew was so common among those Christians, in the early age, to whom, like Papias himself, that language "was not vernacular," that they could be said to translate for themselves from a Hebrew document? Is there the slightest evidence that the language of Palestine ever became generally, or even, except most rarely, known to Greek-speaking nations? Is not the very opposite universally admitted? Does not Jerome, when referring to the supposed Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew, expressly say of it, (Comm. in Hos., Opp., iii., 134,) "*Quod non poterant legere, nisi qui ex Hebræis erant?*" and where, then, the "every one" among the Gentiles who translated this Hebrew document? Secondly, Why should the *Greeks* have laboured so hard to translate this narrative of St Matthew, when their wants were specially provided for in the Gospels of St Mark and St Luke, and when the Gospel of St Matthew was, on the supposition of its Hebrew original, not intended or fitted

\* "Introduct. to the N. T.," i., 69.



for them at all? It was *par excellence* the Gospel for the Jews; and why, then, should the Gentiles have struggled so industriously to extract some meaning from a document, which, by the mere fact of its being written in the peculiar language of Palestine, it was supposed that they did not require? Will it be said, that it was only till the Gospels of St Mark and St Luke were published, that the Greeks thus laboured to translate into their own language the Hebrew Gospel, and that after these were given to the world, their efforts ceased? Then I ask, Thirdly, How comes it to pass, that, if the whole Christian world were dependent for a time on a Gospel in the Hebrew language, and if, as was natural in such circumstances, they strove to the utmost to understand it,—if, in short, the Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew was, during many years, in everybody's hands as the sole authoritative account of the Christian faith,—how comes it to pass in such a case, that no trace of it whatever has been preserved in the writings of antiquity, at least out of Palestine? Is it conceivable, that a Gospel which, for a time, was *every one's* Gospel, should have perished so utterly, that no relic of it has survived? If the Gentile Christians generally did, as is supposed, derive, for a series of years, their information respecting the religion which they professed, from a book written in Hebrew by the apostle Matthew, can we believe that it would so easily and entirely have been suffered to fall into oblivion? When it is conceived that the Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew was confined to *Palestine*, some plausibility may be given to the notion, that, although an inspired book, it was suffered to fall into obscurity, because never known, nor intended to be known, by the Christian

world at large. But when it is maintained that "every one" among the Gentiles was, for a considerable period, in the habit of translating it, the speedy and complete oblivion into which it was permitted to fall becomes utterly inexplicable. The very difficulty which, according to the view under consideration, Greek readers felt in making out its meaning, must have impressed its statements all the more upon their minds; and it is, in such a case, totally incredible, that the wave of forgetfulness should so soon and effectually have passed over their memories, and obliterated every impression which had been produced by their hard and constant study of that Hebrew document.

Thus, it appears that the statement of Papias, when carefully examined, is found replete with folly, and comes to us most naturally as the saying of one who, while doubtless possessed of many valuable qualities, is certified as having been a man of easy credulity, and scanty judgment.

The next testimony is that of Irenæus, (Hær., iii., 1,) in the following terms:—"Matthew also issued a Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the church there."\* It seems to

\* The Greek of Irenæus, as preserved by Eusebius, (Eccl. Hist., vii., 8,) is as follows: 'Ο μὲν δὲ Ματθαῖος ἐν τοῖς Ἑβραίοις τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ αὐτῶν καὶ γράφην ἐξήνεγκεν εὐαγγελίου. The attempt which has been made by Hales, Robinson, (Theol. Dict.,) Wordsworth, and others, to interpret the καὶ in this passage as implying the publication of *two* Gospels, seems to me vain. The meaning simply is, that St Matthew, after preaching to the Hebrews, *also* published a Gospel in their dialect. The date assigned to this alleged fact (A.D. 61-63) is, in all probability, as erroneous as the fact itself is misstated. The early publication of St Matthew's Gospel (A.D. 37-41) appears to admit of no question.

me most probable, from a consideration of all the circumstances, that, so far as the question respecting the original language of St Matthew's Gospel is concerned, these words are not possessed of any independent value. They appear nothing more than the echo of Papias. We know from Eusebius, (*Hist., ut sup.*), that Irenæus, like many others, was a great follower of that father on account of his antiquity. We are even informed that he adopted millenarian notions, simply because these had been espoused by a man that had known Polycarp, whom he held in so much veneration. And in the same way, there seems to me reason to believe, that he embraced this opinion regarding the original language of St Matthew's Gospel, simply because he found it contained in the writings of Papias.\*

But I am not at all anxious to press this view of the words now before us. Let them be considered as an independent statement by Irenæus. In that case, they are no doubt to be regarded as embodying the prevalent tradition of his times. We should remember, however, in connexion with it, how easily, in an uncritical age, erroneous opinions on such points are propagated, and that thus tradition often becomes as much the inventor of fiction as the preserver of truth. And however ancient and wide-spread the tradition in question may have been, it must, after all, be tested by *facts*, in order to be rated at its proper value. If found inconsistent with these, its credit is gone, and it must at once be abandoned. Nor can any mere statements based on such tradition, whatever their number or apparent trustworthiness, be held sufficient to set aside the enduring and unquestionable evidence of

\* Comp. *Hug*, "Introduction," ii., § 8.

its originality, which we have found imbedded in our existing Greek Gospel. The utmost which they can prove, even though their undoubted truth be admitted, is, as has been remarked, that St Matthew wrote *also* in Hebrew. If any are disposed to attribute so much weight to the testimonies of Irenæus and others, as to come to this conclusion, they will, in my humble judgment, greatly exaggerate their importance, as well as involve themselves in difficulties which, as will afterwards be noticed, seem to me insuperable. But the essential point is, that our existing *Greek* Gospel be admitted the immediate production of the apostle Matthew ; and the evidence of that fact which has already been adduced, unless proved insufficient, can be affected by no testimonies, statements, or assertions whatever.

The report as to St Matthew having written in Hebrew, which, as we have seen, first appears in the writings of Papias, is repeated over and over again by the ancient fathers of the Church. This was naturally to be expected. "Writers," says Bolingbroke, "copy one another ; and the mistake that was committed, or the falsehood that was invented by one, is adopted by hundreds." \* Numerous illustrations of this remark might be produced from all departments of literature,† and certainly not least from the department of Church-history. We find, accordingly, that Papias had many followers. Having been one of the first who collected historical notices on those points which were so interesting to all Christians, that father, notwithstanding

\* "Letters on the Study of History," v., § 4.

† For some curious examples, see *Buckle's* "History of Civilisation in England," vol. i., p. 276, &c.



his simple and credulous character, was necessarily much deferred to by later writers.\* Origen, Eusebius, Epiphanius, Jerome, and others, all repeated the statement which rests as its ultimate historical foundation on the testimony already considered; and by giving heed to it, they were, as we shall see, betrayed into various difficulties and inconsistencies.

But before proceeding to notice the statements of these writers, we must glance at the account given us of another, who is deemed quite an independent witness. Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.*, v., 10) contains the following passage respecting Pantænus:—"Pantænus is said to have visited the Indians, where, according to report, he found the Gospel of Matthew in use, before his arrival, among the Christians there, to whom Bartholomew, one of the apostles, had preached, and who left them the Gospel of Matthew written in Hebrew letters," &c. It can hardly be denied that there is some intrinsic improbability in this statement. And we must also notice the hesitating way in which the historian reports it. As given by Eusebius, the account is very far from having the weight of direct testimony. Pantænus is *said* to have gone where it is *said* he found the Hebrew Gospel,† the proverbial uncertainty of mere tradition being in this case attended by a double intensity.

And thus we find it is with the supposed Aramaic original of St Matthew's Gospel as with the many stories of apparitions which have been palmed upon the world. Multitudes are ready to avouch the fact, but it is almost always on the authority of some one

\* "Junioribus, ut solent, sequentibus."—*Wetstein, N. T.*, i., p. 224.

† The Greek here is, λέγεται, ὅθα λόγος εὐρεῖν.

else. There is no such thing as direct personal testimony. One believes because another believed, and that other because he had it from a third whose veracity could not be questioned. But still, the person who actually *saw* with his own eyes the marvellous appearance remains undiscovered, and seems only to conceal himself all the more obstinately, the more his testimony is demanded or desired. And so is it with respect to the Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew. That is the spectre which haunts ecclesiastical antiquity. Many speak of it and assure us of its reality, but *no one ever saw it*. The most that we hear of it is that some one else had met with it, until at last we are introduced to the credulous Papias himself, who was exactly the man to become the father of a *ghost-story*, and to whose weak judgment, we may believe, the whole delusion is to be ascribed. In reference to the testimony of Pantænus, little either need or can be said. It is impossible to disperse the obscurity which hangs around it. There may be some substratum of truth in the statement that the Gospel of Matthew was found among these so-called Indians in *Hebrew letters*. But this does not prove that the apostle wrote his Gospel originally in Hebrew. A translation of the Greek into Hebrew might have been made at an early date, as we know was the case into Syriac. As will afterwards be noticed, this seems to me to have been the origin of the "Gospel according to the Hebrews," and would also account for the existence of a Hebrew Gospel among the Jews of Southern Arabia, to whom the words of Eusebius in this passage probably refer.\* And thus, while, according to

\* *Kirchhofer* remarks on the passage under discussion :—"Dieses

the principle formerly laid down, that ancient testimony is in all points to be accepted, so far as it does not run counter to indisputable facts, we find in this report concerning Pantænus additional proof of the statement otherwise so well substantiated, that St Matthew *was the writer* of a Gospel, we acknowledge nothing in it which leads us, in the face of other evidence, to conclude that that Gospel was originally written in the *Hebrew* language.

The next witness is the accomplished Origen. And here, at length, we meet with one who is thoroughly competent to give plain and decided evidence in favour of the Hebrew original, supposing it had ever existed. Well skilled in Hebrew learning, enthusiastic in sacred studies, earnest and careful in searching out everything that could illustrate the sacred Scriptures, Origen was the very person to find this Hebrew Gospel, if it was to be found, or to preserve to us some traces of its peculiar character, if it had ever been in existence. And he was well acquainted with the leading Christians in Palestine ; so that, as he was sure to desire a sight of the Hebrew Gospel among them, if he really believed it to be that of the apostle, he was equally sure of having his desire most readily gratified. His friends in Palestine would have been delighted to furnish him with any books of Scripture which they might possess in a peculiar form, and we know too much of his habits of mind not to be sure that he would ask them. Origen was as likely as any modern

Indien ist ohne Zweifel das südliche Arabien, welches man auch Indien nannte ; wo das Christenthum bekanntlich sehr früh hingenommen war, indem daselbst viele Juden lebten, unter denen Bartholomäus wahrscheinlich dasselbe verkündigt hatte."—*Quellensammlung*, p. 110.

critic to be interested and excited by the idea of St Matthew's original Gospel being in existence in Hebrew, and would undoubtedly have sought after it had he believed that it was to be found. But, unfortunately for the defenders of the Hebrew original, so little dependence did this learned father place upon the tradition on which they build so much, that he seems at times to have utterly forgotten its existence, and never to have ascribed to it the least practical value. We can hardly doubt that, had he so far credited it as to have believed that the Hebrew original of St Matthew's Gospel was still in existence in his own day, as according to many was the case, he would have taken care to consult it in his labours on the sacred text. And it will not account for his complete neglect of it for such a purpose, to say that by his time it had become greatly corrupted. However much that might have been the case, it was surely still worthy of some examination if it had any existence, just as a MS. at the present day, though so corrupt as the Codex Bezae, may still be of great value in the service of textual criticism. We conclude, therefore, that Origen could not have deemed the then extant "Gospel of the Hebrews" as having any claim to be regarded as in substance the original work of the apostle Matthew, and that it was merely under the influence of a prevalent but baseless tradition, that he ever gave any countenance to the idea of our existing Greek being a translation from the Hebrew. In accordance with this view we find him observing, (*De Orat., Opp.*, i., 245,) in his exposition of the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer, that "the Greek word *ἐπιούσιος* is not used by any of the learned, nor by the common people, but



seems to have been framed by the evangelists, for *both Matthew and Luke* agree in using it without any difference." Here he seems completely oblivious of the fact that St Matthew's Greek Gospel was said to be a translation, and it is only when his mind is specially turned to the subject that he remembers to state his having *learned by tradition* (ὡς ἐν παραδόσει μαθὼν) that the apostle wrote in Hebrew.

The same remarks will apply to Eusebius. Sometimes he seems quite to forget that there was any report current as to the Greek Gospel of St Matthew being a translation from the Hebrew. At other times he recalls the tradition which prevailed to that effect, and writes accordingly. Referring (Comm. in Psal. lxxviii. 2) to the peculiar manner in which a quotation from the Hebrew is made by the evangelist, (Matt. xiii. 35,) he tells us that "Matthew being a Hebrew, made use of his own *interpretation*\* of the original, (ἐρμύξομαι, &c.,) instead of adopting that of the Septuagint (φθέγγομαι, &c.);" Much respect cannot be claimed for the critical judgment of Eusebius. We have had some specimens of his errors in the preceding pages, and others of a still more serious nature (Hist. Eccl., i., 13, &c.) might easily be produced. While, therefore, we are deeply grateful for his labours as a historian, we are not bound to yield much deference to his judgment as a critic. It adds little to the

\* I am perfectly aware of the different views which have been taken of the word ἑκδοσις employed by Eusebius in this passage. Davidson assigns it the meaning "recension;" but that this is incorrect, and that "translation" is its true rendering, appears from the words of Eusebius himself in the very same passage. He immediately uses ἐκδέδωκεν in the sense of "translated," and this is quite sufficient to fix the meaning of ἑκδοσις as given above.

weight of the evidence for the Hebrew original of St Matthew, that he repeats (H. E., iii., 24) the prevailing tradition regarding it ; and, on the other hand, we need by no means adopt his explanation of the variation observable between the Greek text of the first Gospel and the Septuagint in the passage just quoted, unless otherwise satisfied with it. But it seems at least clearly implied in the explanation which he offers, that, for the moment, he regarded St Matthew himself as being the author of our present Greek Gospel, while at another time (Ad. Marin., quæst. 2) we find him attributing a particular Greek expression which occurs in it, (ὁ ψὲ σαββάρων,) not to the apostle, but to the person who translated his work from the Hebrew.

Now, such confusion of thought and statement on this subject is quite compatible with the idea that there was a tradition widely diffused in the Church that St Matthew wrote in Hebrew, but seems inexplicable if that tradition were accepted as embodying an indubitable truth. Impressed at times, as would appear, by the striking evidence of originality which the Gospel itself contains, the fathers express themselves as if they had never heard it was a translation ; and then again, falling under the influence of the prevailing tradition, they write as if they did not regard our present Greek Gospel as an original, while at the same time, they continue to quote it as inspired and authoritative Scripture.

It is almost needless to devote any attention to the statements of later writers,\* but for special reasons we must glance for a moment at the position occupied by

\* The words of Dionysius Bar Salibi, a Syrian bishop of the 12th

Jerome in this controversy. And here we find "confusion worse confounded." At one time Jerome writes as if he had actually *seen* the long-hidden Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew. He says, (De Viris Illus., 3,) "Ipsum Hebraicum habetur usque hodie in Cæsariensi bibliothecâ, quam Pamphilus martyr studiosissime confecit. Mihi quoque a Nazaræis qui in Berœâ urbe Syriæ hoc volumine utuntur, describendi facultas fuit." But again he says, (Comm. in Matt. ii.,) "In Evangelio quo utuntur Nazaræi et Ebionitæ, quod nuper in Græcum de Hebræo sermone transtulimus, et *quod vocatur a plerisque* Matthæi authenticum." And as the latest testimony which he bears on this subject, he says, (Adv. Pel., iii.,) respecting this same Gospel that was in use among the Nazarenes, that it was entitled, "Secundum Apostolos, sive ut *plerique* autumant juxta Matthæum."

Now, without entering at any length into the consideration of these and other passages in Jerome, it is plain that the longer that father investigated the subject, the more doubtful he became as to the claims of the Gospel of the Hebrews, to be regarded as the original work of the apostle Matthew. He found that the canonical Greek Gospel and the existing Hebrew one varied very materially in a multitude of passages. So great indeed was the diversity between them, that Jerome thought it worth his trouble to translate the Ebionite Gospel into Greek.\* This one fact demonstrates the essential difference which must have existed

century, to which such an importance has recently been attached, will be found noticed in the following Chapter.

\* Among other very just remarks which *Baur* makes in reference to the relation of our canonical Gospel to the Gospel of the

between the pretended Hebrew original of Matthew and the Greek Gospel which has always gone under his name. And the accounts which have been transmitted to us of that Hebrew Gospel, as well as the specimens which have been preserved of its contents, prove that it would be an abuse of language in any sense to identify it with our existing Gospel of St Matthew. It both wanted much which is found in the Greek, and contained much which that does not possess. As an example of its omissions, it is sufficient to state, on the authority of Epiphanius, that (in some copies at least) the first two chapters were entirely wanting; as an example of the additions which it contained, I may give the following, which Jerome quotes from it, respecting our Lord's baptism:—"Factum est autem, quum ascendisset Dominus de aquâ, descendit fons omnis Spiritus Sancti et requievit super eum ac dixit ei; Filius, in omnibus prophetis expectabam te, ut venires et requiescerem in te, tu es enim requies mea, tu es filius meus primogenitus, qui regnas in sempiternum." With all these differences there were, no doubt, many passages common to both the Greek and Hebrew Gospels; but whether we judge from the quotations out of the Hebrew document which have been preserved by ancient writers, or by the fact of Jerome having taken the trouble to translate it, we must hold that it was an essentially different work from our existing Greek Gospel of St Matthew.\*

Hebrews, he rightly asks respecting Jerome how, on the supposition of the two Gospels being substantially identical, he should have resolved "das Hebräer-Evangelium in das Griechische zu übersetzen, wenn doch unser griechisches Matthäus-Evangelium selbst schon eine Uebersetzung des Hebräer-Evangeliums war?"—*Evangelien*, p. 575.

\* See the passages of the Hebrew Gospel which have been preserved



The mere existence, however, of this corrupt Hebrew Gospel served to fortify the tradition, already prevalent in the Church, that St Matthew wrote originally in that language. The Jewish sectaries in Palestine eagerly took advantage of the existing tradition to claim for their heretical Gospel the distinction of being the original work of the apostle; and they succeeded in persuading some of the fathers that such was its real character. Epiphanius was completely deceived; and Jerome also was so for a time. But this latter father, as we have seen, became more and more uncertain as to the claims of the Ebionite Gospel, the longer his attention was directed to the subject; and in his latest written works, virtually retracts the testimony he had borne as to its identity with the original of St Matthew, and leaves that opinion to rest on the authority of others.\*

in ancient writers collected in the "Quellensammlung" of *J. Kirchhofer*, p. 448, &c.; or the English reader may consult *Dr Davidson's* "Introduction," i., 17-29.

\* Credner (Einl., § 45) thus writes respecting the view which Jerome at last adopted with regard to the Gospel of the Hebrews:—"Hieronymus, welcher, wie andere Gelehrte damaliger Zeit, in demselben den Grundtext zu unserem Matthäus suchte, erklärte nach jahrelanger Bekannntschaft, Prüfung und Uebersetzung desselben *zuletzt* (im Jahre 415) 'In evangelio juxta Hebræos, quod Judaico quidem sermone sed Hebraicis literis scriptum est, quo utuntur usque hodie Nazareni, secundum apostolos, sive, *ut plerique autumant*, juxta Matthæum, quod et,' etc. Diese letzte Erklärung des Hieronymus steht als entscheidend über allen frühern. Hieronymus fand den Urtext zu unserem Matthäus in diesem Ev. nicht." Yet the upholders of the Hebrew original are in the habit of asserting, on the ground principally of the statements made by Jerome, that "St Matthew's Hebrew Gospel was still extant in the early part of the fifth century, interpolated indeed, but still in existence."—*Edin. Review*, ut sup., p. 184. Dr Cureton goes still further, and maintains of the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew that "there seems to be evidence to prove that it was in existence down to the time of Epiphanius and Jerome in its *genuine* as well as in an extended and interpolated form."—*Syriac Gospels*, p. lxxvii.

We have found, then, that one great source, at least, of the confusion which pervades antiquity with respect to the original language of St Matthew's Gospel is to be found in a statement of the weak and gossiping Papias. And when we remember that that father was unacquainted with Hebrew, as well as deficient in judgment, we can easily conceive how the mistake may have originated. He, no doubt, heard it stated that St Matthew wrote in Palestine with a special reference to the natives of that country; and how naturally would such a man conclude that the apostle must therefore have written in the Hebrew tongue. The apparent propriety of that language rather than Greek being employed in addressing such readers led even Jerome, as we have seen, to assert, in opposition to the most certain evidence, the Hebrew original of the Epistle to the Hebrews. And shall we wonder, then, to find such a man as Papias falling into a similar error? Having, perhaps, just stated\* that St Matthew wrote his Gospel particularly for the benefit of his Jewish countrymen, he adds, almost as a matter of course, that he did so "in the *Hebrew* dialect." How erroneous was any such inference has been evinced in the former part of this work; but it seems to have been accepted by many of the fathers, and its admission furnishes a sufficient explanation of the statements respecting the original language of the first Gospel and of the Epistle to the Hebrews which have descended to us from antiquity.†

\* The connective particle *μὲν οὖν* seems to point to some previous statement which had been made on the subject.

† It has been observed by *Paulus* how the position so generally assumed with respect to St Matthew, by the ancients no less than the moderns—"Er schreib den Hebräern, *also* Hebräisch"—accounts for

It may be added, in illustration and confirmation of this explanation of the manner in which the error of Papias may have arisen, that the same cause has been at work, and the same effect has, to some extent, followed with respect to the Gospel of St Mark. An idea, right or wrong, prevailed in the Church that Mark wrote at Rome, and specially for the Romans, and from this the inference was drawn that he must have written in their own language, that is, in Latin. We find this stated at the end of the Peschito version of St Mark's Gospel ; and what was a natural supposition for a writer in Syria with respect to St Mark, was equally natural for a writer in Phrygia with respect to St Matthew. Both writers were probably ignorant of the fact that *Greek* was a language so well understood, as we have seen was the case, in Rome as well as Palestine, and were thus betrayed into error. Such statements, therefore, are to be regarded as due to mistaken *à priori* notions of the writers, and ought not, in either case, to be viewed as possessed of the proper character of testimony.

With regard to the Gospel according to the Hebrews, otherwise called the Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew, otherwise the Gospel of Peter, otherwise still, and more pompously, the Gospel of the Twelve Apostles, it is not difficult to account for its origin. The Jewish Christians who remained in Palestine after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans were soon divided into two sects, both zealous for the law, though in different degrees. These were the Ebionites

such statements in the fathers. See his "Handbuch," p. 35, and "Conservatorium," p. 159.

and Nazarenes ; of whom the former held, among other very erroneous tenets, that the law of Moses was *universally* binding, while the latter, with a nearer approach to orthodoxy in general, maintained that it was obligatory only on *Jewish* Christians. The Jewish prejudices of these sects led them to prefer that their sacred books should be read in the Hebrew language. Some of the New Testament scriptures were therefore early translated from the Greek, and used, not from necessity, as has been supposed, but from bigotry, in the peculiarly Jewish dialect. And the Gospel of St Matthew having been written in Palestine, and principally intended for the Christians of that country, naturally obtained the first place in their estimation. A version of it had been made from the original Greek into Hebrew at a very early period, and, with many omissions and interpolations, it continued in the time of Jerome to be used by those Judaic Christians, and was by them often boasted of, and referred to as the supposed original of St Matthew's Gospel.\*

Such, then, is the simple explanation which I venture to propose of the perplexities and contradictions which appear on this subject among the fathers of the Church. And for any one, on the ground of such statements as those which have been considered, to set up the claims of a Gospel which cannot be said with certainty ever to have been *seen* by any one, and which has left no trace of its existence in the Church,

\* Compare a valuable note on the Gospel according to the Hebrews, by Professor Stuart, in *Fosdick's* translation of Hug's "Introduction," p. 700 ; also, *Wetstein's* "Nov. Test.," i., p. 224 ; and *Kirchhofer's* "Quellensammlung," p. 520.



against the claims of another Gospel which has been acknowledged as inspired from the earliest age, which has been constantly appealed to as the genuine production of the apostle Matthew, from which all known versions, even the earliest, have been made, and which bears in itself the proof of its own originality, appears to me, I confess, to be the perverting of all evidence, and the turning of criticism into foolishness.

## CHAPTER V.

### OTHER HYPOTHESES RESPECTING ST MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

It has been observed in the preceding chapter, that notwithstanding all that is said by the early fathers of the Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew, it is extremely doubtful (to say the least) whether any one of them finally believed that he had ever seen it. But oftener than once, in modern times, the learned world has been startled by the intelligence that the great discovery had at last been made. Under the influence of that tradition current in the Church, that St Matthew wrote at first in Hebrew, and that our Greek Gospel is only a translation of his work, rewards have been offered for the recovery of the long-lost original, and biblical scholars have several times persuaded themselves, and sought to persuade others, that they have been fortunate enough to find it.\*

\* "Papst Nicholas V. both 5000 Ducaten, wenn man ihm das Hebraische Evangelium Matthæi schaffen konnte."—*Zedler, Univ. Lex.*, Art. Matth. With reference to the works subsequently issued, professing to be St Matthew's Hebrew Gospel, *Poole* remarks, ("Proleg. in Matt.") "Illud a Munstero editum non esse Matthæi, adeo certum est, ut nullis indigeat argumentis. Illud Munsteri, nec non aliud Merceri, nihil habet genuinum. Nam styli indicium, additiones ac detractones quedam, et maxima inter illa varietas, satis arguunt, ea a Judæis diversis et eruditione disparibus, e Græco aut Latino esse translata."—Compare *Fabricius*, "Bib. Gr.," iv., 758.

The only one of these fancied discoveries which now calls for the least consideration is that recently announced by Dr Cureton, the well-known Oriental scholar. In the Syriac Gospels which he lately published, we are promised an approach towards that gratification which, on the supposition that the first Gospel was originally written in Hebrew, so few have ever enjoyed. The learned editor of these Remains does not quite claim that they contain part of the veritable original of St Matthew, but he uses the following sufficiently exciting language regarding them—that this Syriac copy has “pretensions to be considered as more nearly representing the exact words of St Matthew than any other yet discovered.”\*

This statement, if substantiated, would of necessity make an important change in the question which has just engaged our attention. We should be furnished with a real existing rival to our present Greek Gospel, and no longer tantalized by hearing continually of a Hebrew original, which eludes all attempts at identification or discovery. There must, however, be the clearest evidence to establish the claim which Dr Cureton puts forth in behalf of his recent publication. We must have the plainest proof set before us, ere we will believe either that our Greek Gospel is of such inferior authority as he contends, or that the true original of St Matthew, so long missing, has at last approximately been found; and such proof, as I shall now endeavour briefly to shew, the present work of Dr Cureton utterly fails to produce.

Dr Cureton's argument proceeds on the assumption that St Matthew's Gospel was originally written in

\* *Cureton's "Syriac Gospels,"* p. lxxxi.

*Hebrew only.* "In the preceding observations upon the text of St Matthew," he remarks, (p. lxxiii.) "it will be seen that I have assumed that his Gospel was originally written in the Hebrew dialect, generally spoken by the Jews in Palestine at the time when the events took place of which it furnishes the narrative. I have done this upon the conviction that no fact relating to the history of the Gospels is more fully and satisfactorily established." If, then, I have succeeded in the previous chapters in shewing that St Matthew did *not* write in Hebrew, at least not to the exclusion of the Greek as a true original, the argument of Dr Cureton is, in this point of view, entirely set aside. Instead of rejoicing with him that now, after being buried in oblivion for almost the whole period of our era, something like the original Gospel of St Matthew has at last been discovered, we can hold to the conviction that the genuine work of the apostle has been in the hands of the Church from the beginning, and is still possessed by us in that simple Greek text with which we are all familiar.

But there is something more than assumption in Dr Cureton's work, and in this is found the necessity for noticing it here at all. If he simply took for granted that St Matthew wrote exclusively in Hebrew, and built up his theory on that supposition, his argument might be left, without a word, to be judged of by the considerations which have been adduced in the preceding chapters. But, while proceeding on the assumption mentioned, he professes also to find confirmatory evidence for it in the comparison which he institutes between the Greek and Syriac texts ; and in various conclusions which he thinks result from such a com-



parison. Thus, after referring to those passages in the fathers which are usually quoted in support of the Hebrew original, and stating that "such a chain of historical evidence appears amply sufficient to establish the fact that St Matthew wrote his Gospel originally in the Hebrew dialect of the time," he adds (p. lxxiv.)—"A careful and critical examination of the Greek text of this Gospel will afford very strong confirmation of this." The same result, he believes, follows from the comparison which he makes between this Syriac fragment and the passages which have been preserved to us of the Gospel according to the Hebrews. "This comparison," he writes, (p. lxxxviii.,) "by proving the agreement between the two, tends also to confirm the historical testimony as to the fact that St Matthew originally wrote his Gospel in Hebrew or Syro-Chaldaic, and that the Gospel according to the Hebrews was often taken for the authentic work of the apostle."

Since, then, Dr Cureton conceives that on various grounds he can derive support from this Syriac recension of St Matthew for the opinion that the apostle wrote originally in the cognate language, and also maintains that the Syriac he has edited is really the closest approximation yet discovered to the original work of the apostle; and since his views on these points have been adopted and advocated by Dr Tregelles and some other recent writers,\* it still appears necessary to inquire into the validity of those grounds on which he rests. I shall not attempt to do so at any great

\* Thus, the writer of the article in the *Edin. Review* (July, 1859) expresses it as his belief (p. 187) that "the considerate scholar will be brought, step by step, to the settled judgment that this St Matthew is really sprung from the Hebrew original of that apostle."

length. Nor, indeed, can that now be regarded as needful. For, while every reader of these Remains will gladly admit that they possess no little interest of their own, and will readily acknowledge the labour which has been expended upon them by their learned editor, few scholars appear at all disposed to accept the hypothesis by which their publication has been accompanied, the purport of which is to exalt this Syriac recension of St Matthew at the expense of our existing Greek Gospel.

The question, then, is just this, whether it is our canonical Gospel or this Syriac text which appears to be the original work, for, of course, on the ground maintained, if the one be held an original, the other must immediately take rank as a translation. Dr Cureton very confidently maintains that the Greek exhibits unmistakable proofs of being a translation from the Hebrew ; I venture, with all deference to his critical judgment, as confidently to maintain that, on the contrary, this Syriac is plainly a translation from the Greek.

The manner in which Dr Cureton endeavours to make good his position is by pointing out, in the differences which exist between the Syriac copy and the Greek, evident traces of error, as he thinks, on the part of the Greek translator, from his having mistaken one Hebrew word for another. He takes it for granted (p. lxxx.) "that the original Gospel of St Matthew, although composed in Syro-Chaldaic, the vernacular tongue of the Hebrew people in Palestine at that time, was, nevertheless, written in Hebrew characters similar to those still used by the Jews." He supposes, then, that the apostle employed the square form of the He-

brew letters still in common use at the present day, and not the Syriac Estrangelô characters made use of commonly by those who wrote in the Syriac language, and exemplified in the beautiful type in which the Syriac Gospels which he has edited are printed.

And on this ground he argues that the Greek translator frequently mistook one Hebrew word for another, the resemblances between the two being often so close as easily to prove deceptive. Thus, in chap. i. 21, instead of "He shall save *His people*," as in the Greek, we read in this Syriac copy, "He shall save *the world*." The latter, Dr Cureton supposes to be the genuine reading; and accounts for what he considers the error of the Greek translator by saying, "The variation must have arisen from the similarity of לעלמא and לעמא. And so in a multitude of other cases. He supposes, continually, that the original Gospel of the apostle having been written in Hebrew characters, the Greek translator very often mistook, as in the instance quoted, one Hebrew word for another.

But *why the Greek translator?* Why not *the Syriac transcriber?* Admitting the soundness of Dr Cureton's hypothesis, that the character above exemplified was that employed by St Matthew, on what ground does he charge the blunder, which has so often been made between one Hebrew word and another, on the Greek translator rather than the Syriac transcriber? If it be supposed that St Matthew wrote his Gospel in square Hebrew letters, very different from those usually employed by Syriac writers, how can he be sure that the person who transferred the original Gospel into the cognate language, did not himself mistake such words as those instanced above, and thus

give rise to the variations now perceptible between the Syriac copy and the Greek? This supposition is at least as probable as the other. A *translator* would have his attention more fixed than a *transcriber*. The mind of the one would be in full operation, and the work in which he was engaged would of necessity be slowly executed; while the other had little more than a mechanical process to accomplish, and might very hastily, and therefore at times erroneously, perform his task. On the ground, then, which Dr Cureton himself assumes, it is at least as probable, that the errors of the kind referred to were committed by the Syriac transcriber, as that they are to be traced to the Greek translator; and the question between them is thus shifted to the further ground,—on which side do the variations bear the appearance of mistake, and on which may there be discovered the stamp of originality and correctness?

Now, after a careful and repeated comparison of the Greek text with this Syriac copy, I can only express my amazement that any one should hesitate as to the answer to be given to these questions. In my humble judgment, the marks of translation are so frequent and obvious in the Syriac, that nothing but a blinding, though very natural, partiality for the work which he was so fortunate as to discover, could have prevented Dr Cureton from perceiving them. By its additions, omissions, and, I venture to add, manifest mistranslations, this Syriac fragment of St Matthew, whatever the age to which it is to be referred, may be clearly shewn to be greatly over-estimated when it is brought into rivalry with our existing Greek Gospel, not to speak of the superiority which Cureton so frequently



assigns it. I shall bring forward a few specimens of its peculiarities under each of the heads mentioned, and am quite sure that very little will be requisite, in order to expose the utter hollowness of its pretensions, as approaching more nearly than any other to the original text of the apostle.

First, let us look at its *additions*. These are very frequent,—so numerous, indeed, that *amplification* may, in general, be said to be the characteristic of this Syriac copy as compared with the Greek. Now this is in itself a very suspicious circumstance. There is no sounder rule in biblical criticism than that which is announced in the first of the canons of Griesbach,—“*Brevior lectio, nisi testium vetustorum et gravium auctoritate penitus destituatur, præferenda est verborum siori.*” And it is manifest that this rule is at least as applicable to the determination of a question like that now before us, as to the settlement of the relative value of ancient MSS. Conciseness is to be looked for rather in the original than in a translation. And when we find this Syriac recension of St Matthew so marked by pleonastic and supplementary expressions as compared with the Greek, we can hardly hesitate as to which of them is to be judged the original work. Very many examples of such additions might be quoted; let the following suffice:—

In the very first chapter we see the tendency displayed by the insertion of *the three kings* at ver. 8. There is not the slightest authority of an external kind for this addition; and it is in direct opposition to the statement made by the evangelist himself at ver. 17. St Matthew tells us (even in this Syriac copy) that “from David until the carrying away into Babylon,

are *fourteen* generations," whereas if these three additional names be inserted, there are *seventeen*; and thus the sacred writer is made to contradict himself. In ii. 20, "to take it away" is added; in iii. 17, we read, "Thou art my Son and my beloved;" in iv. 24 is added, "and upon each one of them he was laying his hand;" in vi. 30, "is gathered and" is inserted; in viii. 5, 9, 14, 18, 21, we find various supplements to the Greek text; and so on throughout, several examples of such addition usually occurring in every chapter.

It is to be observed, moreover, that many of these additions are taken from the parallel passages in the other Gospels. Thus, at v. 12 we read in the Syriac, but not in the Greek, "in that day," words which are found in the parallel passage, Luke vi. 23. And so at xxi. 13, "for all nations" is inserted, in accordance with the parallel passages, Mark xi. 17, and Luke xix. 46; while after xx. 28, a whole paragraph is inserted from the Gospel of Luke. Now, a special caution is given by Griesbach against accepting such additions as genuine. Among other reasons which should lead us to prefer the shorter reading, he mentions particularly this one,—"*si plenior lectio parallelis locis ad verbum consonet*," which is the case with not a few of the additions to the Greek contained in this Syriac copy. It must also be noticed that some of these additions have the manifest appearance of being interpolations. This is plainly the case with the remarkable addition to the Greek text at xx. 28, an addition found also in the Codex Bezae, and in some other MSS. of little authority, "But seek ye that from little things ye may become great, and not from great things may

become little," &c. To endeavour to explain such phenomena, as Cureton and some of his followers seem inclined to do, by the supposition that though this Syriac recension is held to have been *independent* of the Greek, these peculiarities were nevertheless derived *from* the Greek, seems to amount to little less than a substantial abandonment of the argument.

Secondly, we may glance at the *omissions*. These are much less numerous, as compared with the Greek, than are the additions; and some of them are sanctioned by the best critical texts, (such as that which occurs chap. xx. 22, 23,) so that nothing can be founded upon them. There are some, however, which seem most conclusively to disprove the claim put forward for this Syriac recension as being anterior to, or independent of, the Greek. I shall not insist on omissions of individual words, as in v. 28, vi. 19, xiii. 39, xiv. 15, &c., since these may be attributed to carelessness or inadvertence on the part of the transcriber; nor on omissions, such as occur at iv. 2, &c., which are manifestly owing to the influence of the parallel passages in Mark and Luke; nor even on the very strange and suspicious form in which this Syriac text contains the doxology to the Lord's Prayer, chap. vi. 13. But, passing by all these, there are other omissions which occur in this Syriac copy, of such a kind as seem to leave no room for the slightest doubt that, at whatever period formed, it was derived originally from the Greek.

I allude to those cases, of which some clear examples may be given, in which the omission is manifestly due to a *homœoteleuton* which occurs in *the Greek*, but not in *the Syriac*. Let me refer, for instance to

chap. xii. 47. That verse is in this Syriac recension of Dr Cureton *entirely omitted*; and why? Let the following statement suggest the answer. It is *also* omitted in the Vatican MS., (B.,) and in a few other MSS. And the reason in Greek is plain; so evident, indeed, that Cardinal Mai inserts the verse, and remarks, "Hic versiculus incaute prætermisus fuit in codice." The omission manifestly resulted from the *homœoteleuton* in ver. 46, 47. Both verses end with *λαλῆσαι*; and thus, as in many similar instances, the transcriber's eye deceiving him, a whole verse lying between these two words was omitted. This is universally acknowledged as the account to be given of the *lacuna* in the Greek; and is so obvious, that not the most fervent admirers of the Vatican MS. plead for rejecting this verse on the weight of its authority. But what explanation shall be given of the omission of this verse in the Syriac, supposing that to be what Dr Cureton and some others have imagined that it is? How did it come to pass that the Syriac writer failed to insert this verse, if he wrote independently of the Greek? And what possible account can be given of its omission, except this very obvious and satisfactory one, that the Syriac of Cureton, so strongly extolled by him above our existing Greek Gospel, is itself but a version from the Greek; and that the translator either himself fell into the same snare as the transcriber of the Vatican MS., or made use of a MS. in which the error in question had already been committed?

Thirdly, let us now notice for a moment some obvious *mistranslations*, *paraphrastic* and *inexact renderings*, which may be observed in this Syriac



copy, and which clearly indicate its dependence on the Greek. Thus at vi. 24, we read "will *sustain*," instead of "will adhere to," the Greek word ἀντέξεται having been mistaken for ἀνέξεται; \* and at xx. 13, we have the totally unsupported reading, "do not trouble me," instead of οὐκ ἀδικῶ σε, in the Greek. Again, there are very many cases in which it is far more natural, to say the least, to regard the diffuse, if not absolutely distorted, expressions employed in the Syriac as derived from the Greek, than the simple and concise Greek from the pleonastic Syriac. Thus at i. 25, we read in the Syriac, "dwelt purely with her," for οὐκ ἐγίνωσκεν αὐτὴν in the Greek; at ii. 7, we find "was examining that he might know," for ἡκρίβωσε; at iii. 10, "lo, the axe is arrived," for ἤδη ἡ ἀξίνη κεῖται; at v. 41, "biddeth thee that thou shouldest go," for σε ἀγγαρεύσει; at xi. 28, "bearing heavy burdens," for πεφορτισμένοι; at xiv. 6, "in the midst of the banquet," for ἐν τῷ μεσῷ; at xxii. 16, "the *servants* of Herod," for Ἡρωδιανῶν, &c., while in such passages as xviii. 25, "And when he had nothing to pay, he commanded that he should be sold, he and his wife and his children, and *all that he had should be taken*;" and xx. 14, 15, "Take thine own and go; and *if I wish* that I should give to this last as to thee, am I not authorized that I should do with my own any thing that I wish?" the construction is quite changed from the Greek, and readings destitute of all authority are adopted. It seems too plain to need further illustrations, that this

\* *Ewald* deems this of itself conclusive of the point in question, remarking, "Neben einem so augenscheinlichen Beweise kann wohl von einem Hebr. Ur-Matthäos als Urschrift schon ansich keine Rede mehr seyn."—*Jahrbücher der biblischen Wissenschaft*, 1858, p. 81.

Syriac copy cannot possibly be viewed as an original work independent of the Greek, but that, mediately or immediately, it must be held to have been derived from our canonical Gospel.

In addition to the above remarks, it may be proper to notice, in a sentence or two, those *intensive* forms which occur both in this Syriac copy and the Peschito, since these are thought by Dr Cureton to give some countenance to the pretensions he puts forth for his edition. The following observations, which he makes upon a passage of this kind, will shew the nature of his reasoning, and also the somewhat serious length to which he is inclined to carry his theory with respect to the accuracy of all the first three Greek Gospels. At chap. xxi. 41, we find the rendering, "evilly, evilly, will he destroy them," and the accompanying remarks of Cureton : "The intensive form of **בִּישׁ בִּישׁ** repeated : the translator (of St Matthew's Gospel into Greek) does not seem to have been familiar with this, and therefore has rendered *κακούς κακῶς ἀπολέσει αὐτούς*, and the Latin *malos male perdet*. The Peschito retains the idiomatic expression as here. Both Mark and Luke have substituted for **בִּישׁ בִּישׁ**, *evilly, evilly*, *ἐλεύσεται*, probably from some defect in the original MS., almost as if there had been read in Hebrew **בּוֹא יבּוֹא**."

Now, not to do more than mention the somewhat important fact, which Dr Cureton entirely overlooks, that St Matthew here reports the words of the *by-standers*, while St Mark and St Luke give the words of *Christ himself*, it is admitted by almost every critic, that the Peschito of Matthew, like the other books, is a translation immediately from the Greek. Even Dr Tregelles contends for this, and on the very best

grounds.\* It follows then, of course, that the intensive form here employed in both Syriac texts is a translation *from the Greek*, and not *vice versa* as Dr Cureton argues, so that the error, if there is one, falls to the side of the Syriac, and not the Greek.

I only observe further, in regard to the question before us, that additional proof of the superiority and originality of our canonical Gospel is found in the fact that *coarseness* is, in several respects, the characteristic of this Syriac copy as compared with the Greek. Those delicate shades of meaning which appear in the Greek Gospel, as at iii. 14, &c., are often wanting in the Syriac; connective particles are omitted, or inserted, apparently very much at random, vi. 22, (*for* inserted and *therefore* omitted,) vii. 19, 21, xi. 10, xii. 29, &c.; while in other cases, as at vii. 16, xii. 33, xxiii. 6, ("and love the chief seats *and* suppers" for ἐν τοῖς δείπνοις,) quite the wrong expression appears to have been chosen.

It being perfectly certain, then, that the claims put forward in behalf of this Syriac recension cannot be substantiated, must we deny that it is to be identified with that which Dionysius Bar Salibi, bishop of Amida in the twelfth century, refers to, when he speaks of a Syriac copy as being occasionally met with, which was "made out of the Hebrew?" By no means; I believe that this part of Cureton's argument is clearly made out. But then, though Bar Salibi's statement be admitted to the fullest extent, what does it amount to? Simply, I conceive, to this—that there was then a Syriac version in existence (and from the rarity of its occurrence, apparently but little esteemed) which had

\* Horne's "Introduction," iv., p. 266.

been *derived from the Greek through the Hebrew*. We have already seen reason to conclude that the Gospel of the Hebrews was at first simply a Hebrew version of the Greek Gospel of St Matthew. And there seems to me no reason to doubt that this Syriac version of Cureton is itself derived from that ancient Aramaic translation. He himself points out the correspondence which exists between the Syriac he has edited and the Gospel of the Hebrews, so far as comparison is available ; and this correspondence has been said by one of the supporters of his views to "put the crown" upon his argument.\* To me, on the other hand, it seems entirely to demolish all the pretensions which have been put forth in behalf of this Syriac text. It proves that we ought to regard it as only the *version of a version*, and thus as having no claim to stand side by side even with the Peschito, far less to be esteemed equal or superior to the original Greek. And when we take this view both of its origin and its pretensions, all the phenomena which it presents seem easily explicable. We find a satisfactory explanation both of its excellences and errors. Its striking agreement in several passages with the oldest Greek MSS. is exactly what we would expect from its undoubted antiquity. Its mistakes, interpolations, and paraphrases, again, are quite in harmony with the paternity which has been assigned it, and seem of themselves to require such an account of its origin. Thus, to refer only to

\* *London Quarterly Review*, April, 1860, p. 67. It is but fair to state that the writer here referred to, while so far accepting the views of Cureton as to declare that "this Syriac St Matthew cannot be considered a translation," (p. 74,) is very far from agreeing with him on other points, and speaks of him (p. 69) as "pushing his MS. hypothesis to extravagant and even dangerous lengths."



one example, we find at chap. xi. 5, the rendering, "the poor *are sustained*," instead of the Greek *πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται*—"to the poor the Gospel is preached." Now, it will scarcely admit of dispute which of these two readings is to be preferred. All evidence, internal and external, supports the Greek. How, then, it will be asked, is the error of the Syriac to be accounted for? and to this question let Dr Cureton himself suggest the answer. "The difference here" he says, in his note on the passage, "is between the *מסטברין* and *מסטיברין*, or, if the י be omitted, which is often the case, simply in the pronunciation." Of course, *he* concludes in favour of the Syriac reading, however intrinsically improbable, and externally unsupported; but, on the contrary supposition, we give the following explanation of the difference in question: The Greek Gospel of St Matthew had, at a very early date, been translated into Hebrew. The characters employed were, I believe with Cureton, those above exemplified. The Syriac transcriber thus fell into the mistake of confounding two words very similar in appearance, though quite different in signification; and in this way, as in the many analogous cases observable in this Syriac text, we account for the discrepancy existing between it and the Greek.

It appears, then, that a close examination of this Syriac Gospel furnishes us with grounds for acquiescing in the declaration that it was "made out of the Hebrew," and strongly corroborates our former conclusion, that that Hebrew Gospel was itself *made out of the Greek*. This, as we have seen, is the only supposition which will account for such omissions as occur at chap. xii. 47, omissions which must evidently have been due at first to the Greek text. And thus, this

discovery, so happily made in our own day, of the ancient Syriac version we have been considering, far from subverting the authority of our Greek Gospel, tends more clearly than ever to illustrate its claims to be regarded as the original work of the apostle, to shew that from it *all* Gospels, in whatever language, bearing the name of St Matthew have been derived, and so to demonstrate the immovableness of that foundation on which its authority rests.

The only other hypothesis connected with St Matthew's Gospel which remains to be considered is that which supposes him to have been the author of *two* Gospels, the one in Hebrew and the other in Greek. As was formerly remarked, this theory is of comparatively recent date. The ancient fathers, while so generally deluded into the notion of regarding our Greek Gospel as a translation, never thought of attributing it to the apostle himself. Various other names were suggested as that of the probable translator, such as those of St John, St James, and even St Paul, but never that of St Matthew. It was only about the times of Bengel, that the hypothesis now to be considered was first suggested. That illustrious critic having observed that St Matthew is declared by the fathers to have written in Hebrew, and yet unwilling to abandon the true originality of the Greek Gospel, throws out the suggestion,—“*Quid obstat, quo minus idem Græce eundem librum eodem exemplo scripserit, etiam si proprie non ex lingua in linguam transferret?*” \* Various modifications of this hypothesis have been proposed by later writers. But, in every

\* *Bengelii*, “*Gnom. N. T.*,” p. 2.

one of its forms, it appears to me utterly untenable, being at once destitute of all external evidence, and opposed to those internal indications which are presented in our existing Greek Gospel.

First, there is *no evidence* in its support. Not the least *distinctive* proof belongs to this theory. Nothing in the Gospel itself suggests it, and no one in antiquity ever dreamt of it. All that can be said in its favour is that it *seems* to offer a means of escape from urgent difficulties. It is avowedly a compromise between two antagonist opinions, and it leans upon both for support. Whatever plausibility or seeming evidence it possesses is derived from borrowing both right and left, (if the expression may be allowed,) both from the hypothesis of a Greek, and from that of a Hebrew original. Accordingly, we find that the supporters of this middle hypothesis state, in the strongest terms, the evidence both for the Greek and the Hebrew original. This is strikingly observable, for instance, in Olshausen among German critics, and in Lee of Dublin in this country. Olshausen says, that "while all the fathers of the Church relate that Matthew wrote in Hebrew, yet they universally make use of the *Greek* text as a genuine apostolic composition," and adds that "our Greek Matthew is of a character so peculiar, that one cannot believe it to be a mere translation." Dr Lee quotes these statements with approbation, and, while admitting the validity of the tradition that St Matthew wrote in Hebrew, contends very earnestly that our present Greek Gospel is also the original work of that apostle. "All versions," he says, "even the ancient Syriac, (in which dialect, be it observed, the Gospel is said to have been originally written,) are

taken from the present Greek of St Matthew, and not from an unknown Aramaic original ;” and he adds, that “since the concurrent voice of antiquity declares the first of our four Gospels to have proceeded from St Matthew, we are justified in assuming that it actually *has* proceeded, *in its present form*, from the pen of the apostle.” \*

Thus, unable to decide between two conflicting claims, both of which seem to them irresistible, the defenders of the third hypothesis take up a mid-way position—a position which appears to me quite arbitrary and indefensible, but which, like other compromises, possesses no little attraction for a certain class of minds. It seems to furnish a means of escape from all difficulties, and to reconcile all interests. The wide-spread tradition in the ancient Church as to the language in which St Matthew wrote is fully honoured, and at the same time the authority of our existing Gospel is preserved entire. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that this opinion has found several ingenious advocates, and is in considerable estimation at the present day. But, notwithstanding its apparent advantages, it is, after all, only a confession of weakness. It amounts to a virtual acknowledgment, on the part of those who adopt it, that they cannot decide between the mutually hostile arguments adduced in support of the first and second hypotheses. They do, in fact, own the truth of *both* classes of arguments, yet they fully yield to the force of *neither*. And this is a very unsatisfactory state in which to rest. In any science whatever, which depends on probable evidence, a similar expedient might be adopted for getting rid of all difficult and perplexing

\* *Lee on Inspiration*, Appendix P.



questions. But nothing can in this way be settled. For it is evidence only which *can* settle any question, and of evidence for this third opinion respecting St Matthew's Gospel, there is, as has been said, none to be found. This has been candidly admitted by some of its advocates. Thus says a recent writer on the canon of Scripture, referring to the different hypotheses respecting St Matthew's Gospel :—"The two opinions (of the Greek original, on the one hand, and the Hebrew, on the other) were supported by a weight of argument and authority so nearly balanced, that Dr Townson and a few others have adopted a middle course,—viz. that there were two originals ; by which theory *all difficulties* are removed. The only objection is *the want of evidence*." \* This objection, though there were no other, appears to me fatal to the third hypothesis. It is confessed to be a mere unfounded device for evading difficulties. And therefore, with all respect for those sincere friends of the Word of God who have expressed themselves satisfied with it, I cannot but agree with the severe terms of condemnation in which this theory of compromise has been spoken of by some of the most eminent defenders both of the Greek and Hebrew original. On the part of the former, Credner describes it as "entirely destitute of any historical foundation ;" † and De Wette says of it that it is "utterly baseless ;" ‡ while, on the part of the latter, Dr Tregelles observes, "I consider this *reconciling* theory to be quite inadmissible," § and Principal Campbell

\* "The Canon of the Old and New Testaments Ascertained," by A. Alexander, D.D., New Edition, Edin. 1855, p. 136.

† "Diese jeder geschichtlichen Grundlage entbehrende Vermuthung."

‡ "Aus der Luft gegriffen."

§ "On the Original Language of St Matthew's Gospel," p. 21.

declares regarding it, with his usual vigorous sense, that it is "an opinion every way improbable, and so manifestly calculated to serve a turn, as cannot recommend it to a judicious and impartial critic." \*

But, secondly, besides the negative objection which rises up against the middle hypothesis from the utter want of evidence, there are, in my judgment, *clear and positive arguments against it* contained in the structure of our existing Greek Gospel. It seems to me very far from deserving the encomium which its friends generally pass upon it, that it *removes all difficulties*. For, let us look at the Greek Gospel of St Matthew in the light of this hypothesis as to its origin and publication. It is supposed that the apostle first wrote a Gospel in Hebrew, and that afterwards either he or some of his inspired brethren published this Gospel in Greek for the sake of Greek readers. The Hebrew Gospel, intended for the Jews, has perished; the Greek Gospel, meant for the rest of the world, is in our hands at the present day. Nothing, then, could be more evident than that, if this be a true account of the origin of our existing Gospel, its structure and apparent design will be found to correspond with the hypothesis. If it was written specially for the Gentile world, such will appear from its internal character to have been the case. But the *very opposite conclusion* is universally formed from an inspection of its contents. It is held by all critics to bear evidence in itself, as it now exists, that it was intended specially, though not exclusively, for the Jews of Palestine. And it is surely quite enough to prove that it could not have been a translation, or a later edition of an original Hebrew Gospel, published in Greek for the

\* "Preface to St Matthew's Gospel," § 11.

sake of Gentile Christians, that it still contains *Hebrew* expressions which must have been quite unintelligible to mere Greek readers. Thus, to quote only one example, at chap. xxvii. 6, we find the Aramaic term *κορβαν* employed to denote "the treasury," though that word could have conveyed no meaning to any except Jews. It was, as Josephus tells us, (Wars, ii., 9, 4,) the common appellation in Palestine for the temple-treasury, and would thus be quite familiar to the inhabitants of that country. But how one professing to translate or re-issue the original Hebrew Gospel for the benefit expressly of *Greek* readers should have retained this expression seems impossible to conceive.\*

In a word, were the double hypothesis based on truth, we would have found in the Gospel itself decisive evidence of the fact. The contrast between the two works, Hebrew and Greek, would, from their very different design, have been sharply and unmistakably defined. The existing Greek would have borne in itself clear proof that it was meant especially for Gentile Christians; and as the very opposite of this is the case, we conclude that the hypothesis of a twofold original by St Matthew, or of a translation of a Hebrew Gospel into Greek by him or any of his contemporaries, is altogether without foundation.

But while thus led, on grounds of argument, to dis-

\* Comp. above, p. 355. It is worthy of remark, that so far is our existing Greek Gospel of St Matthew from being of a character expressly adapted for *Greek* readers, as according to the double hypothesis it must have been, that in some ancient MSS. we find terms which occur in it supplanted by other expressions which were more easily understood. Thus, in the Codex D, the expression *τρίakovτα ἀργύρια*, (xxvi. 15,) which, says Hug, "to Jews alone is precise and intelligible," is replaced by *τρίakovτα στατήρας*, and so in other cases. Comp. the remarks of Greswell, "Harmony of the Gospels," i., 142.

card every form in which the reconciling theory has been set forth, I may add that, *practically*, it is in no degree opposed to the view which I have endeavoured to establish. It admits that our existing Gospel is the authentic production of the apostle Matthew, and that is all for which I am inclined very strenuously to contend. I do not, indeed, think it desirable that biblical scholars should too readily content themselves with such compromises as that which is involved in this middle hypothesis, and thus give rise to the suspicion, however unjust, that they are more anxious for the credit of Scripture than for the establishment of truth. And, for my own part, I cannot see why any necessity should be felt, on account of mere assertions made by the fathers, to believe that St Matthew ever wrote a Gospel in Hebrew at all. No doubt there is a long *catena* of statements to that effect. But the strength of any chain is no more than that of its weakest part. And when we find that the fathers, in those statements which they make on the point in question, seem to proceed on the assumption that Hebrew was the prevalent language of Palestine in the times of our Lord and His apostles—an opinion which has, in the previous pages, been demonstrated to be erroneous—as well as consider the confused and ambiguous character of their testimony in general, there appears no sufficient ground for believing that St Matthew *ever* wrote any other Gospel than that which we still possess under his venerated name.



## CHAPTER VI.

### ORIGIN OF THE GOSPELS.

As every biblical scholar is aware, there is no question connected with the Gospels which has been felt more difficult or perplexing than that which respects their *origin*. So striking are the coincidences, and at the same time so strange are the diversities between them, that criticism has been tasked to the uttermost to give any satisfactory or even probable account of the manner in which they may have arisen ; and has, by the manifold and mutually destructive theories which it has devised to solve the problem, virtually confessed itself baffled in dealing with this subject.

It would scarcely serve any good purpose to insert here the slightest sketch of the various hypotheses which have been suggested in order to meet the difficulties of this question. German ingenuity has wearied itself to no effect in this department of sacred criticism ; and British scholarship has devoted itself over and over again to the same fruitless labour. The names of Griesbach, Michaelis, Eichhorn, Gratz, Schleiermacher, and many others among foreign critics, are well known to all biblical students in connexion with this question ; and those of Bishops Marsh, Gleig, and

others, are equally well known at home ; while in our own day numerous conflicting hypotheses continue to be framed on the Continent, and are, with less or more variation, repeated by biblical critics in this country.\*

The most elaborate and, probably, on the whole, most accepted theory which has ever been formed on this subject is the celebrated one of Eichhorn and Bishop Marsh, which was proposed in the first instance by the German scholar, then extended and improved by the English dignitary, and last of all fully perfected by the labours of its original author. In the various modifications through which it thus passed, before it at length assumed its *ne plus ultra* of perfection, it furnishes an eminent illustration of the difficulties which embarrass this question ; and it may here be brought more particularly under the reader's notice as a specimen of the toil and ingenuity which have been expended on the subject.

The foundation of the theory is the assumed existence of an Ur-Evangelium, or original Gospel in the Aramaic language. This original work is supposed to have contained all the sections common to the three evangelists, but to have been used by them in different forms or editions. Whenever all the three agree, they must have drawn immediately from the original document ; when two of them agree, they must have used a common modified edition of it ; and when one has anything peculiar, he must have derived it from an edition of the original work which he alone employed,

\* See *F. C. Baur*, "Die Kanonischen Evangelien," *Einkl.*, for a criticism of the various theories which have been proposed on this subject. His talent for *destruction* here finds ample scope, and is remorselessly applied to the many diverse, but all equally unsatisfactory, hypotheses.

or from some other unknown source. The original writing being supposed in the Aramaic language, Eichhorn imagined that he could thus naturally explain both the differences and agreements of a verbal kind which are observable among the first three evangelists. Their differences were accounted for on the ground of their being independent translators; and their agreements by their having hit upon many similar modes of expression in translating from a common document. Eichhorn's hypothesis, then, as at first propounded, stood thus:—

1. The original Aramaic Gospel.
2. A modified edition of this, which was the foundation of Matthew, (A.)
3. Another edition, which was the foundation of Luke, (B.)
4. A third edition, blending A. and B., the foundation of Mark, (C.)
5. A fourth edition, used in common by Matthew and Luke, and explaining their agreement where they differ from Mark, (D.)

Ingenious as this theory must be admitted to have been, it needed no lengthened consideration of it to discover that it was far from meeting all the requirements of the case. Its manifestly weak point was, that it left unaccounted for, the remarkable agreement which sometimes appears among the evangelists, even in regard to the use of the rarest and most striking Greek expressions. Thus both Matthew and Luke employ the words, *πτερύγιον τοῦ ἱεροῦ*, (Matt. iv. 5, Luke iv. 9,) and *ἐπιούσιος*, (Matt. vi. 11, Luke xi. 3,) words of such extreme singularity, that the greatest difficulty has been felt, up to the present day, in fixing

their exact meaning. Again, all the three evangelists concur in using the word *δυσκόλως*, in one passage only, (Matt. xix. 23, Mark x. 23, Luke xviii. 24,) and there in the unusual sense of "hardly," or "difficulty," for which the common classical expression was *δυσχερῶς*, or *χαλεπῶς*; whereas *δυσκόλως*, when it occurs in the classics, means "peevishly," or "morosely." And it has been observed, that the adverb thus peculiarly made use of by all three evangelists is found nowhere else, either in the New Testament, the Septuagint, or the Greek apocryphal books.\* Further, they all employ the striking phrase *οὐ μὴ γεύσονται θανάτου*, (Matt. xvi. 22, Mark ix. 1, Luke ix. 17,) though they differ from each other in the rest of the sentence in which this expression occurs. And, to give only one other example of their striking coincidences. they all agree in the citation, *κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδὸν σου*, (Matt. xi. 10; Mark i. 2; Luke vii. 27;) and thus concur in differing both from the Septuagint and the Hebrew, (Mal. iii. 1.) This is a very important case of agreement; for, as our Lord here changes the person from *μου* to *σου*, He makes that which in the Hebrew is said by Jehovah of Himself to be spoken to the Messiah; and by thus suggesting His own true Godhead, He furnishes a reason for the variation here made from the original text, and which has been so remarkably preserved by all the three evangelists.

It was obvious, from a consideration of these and other instances, that the theory of Eichhorn, as to the origin of the Gospels was not sufficient; and that nothing but the assumption of a common *Greek* source, in addition to the original Aramaic Gospel,

\* Comp. *Marsh's "Dissertation,"* p. 75, &c.



which had been conceived of, would account for the striking coincidences exhibited by the evangelists in their employment of the most remarkable Greek expressions. The want thus felt in the theory of Eichhorn was endeavoured to be supplied by Bishop Marsh through means of his well-known and elaborate hypothesis. This, as stated by himself, is as follows :—"St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke, all three used copies of the common Hebrew document  $\aleph$ , the materials of which St Matthew, who wrote in Hebrew, retained in the language in which he found them, but St Mark and St Luke translated them into Greek. They had no knowledge of each other's Gospel; but St Mark and St Luke, besides the copies of the Hebrew document  $\aleph$ , used a Greek translation of it, which had been made before any of the additions  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , &c., had been inserted. Lastly, as the Gospels of St Mark and St Luke contained Greek translations of Hebrew materials which were incorporated into St Matthew's Hebrew Gospel, the person who translated St Matthew's Hebrew Gospel into Greek frequently derived assistance from the Gospel of St Mark, where St Mark had matter in common with St Matthew; and in those places, but in those places only, where St Mark had no matter in common with Matthew, he had frequently recourse to St Luke's Gospel." Such is the famous hypothesis of Bishop Marsh, as set forth by its author. As analysed and exhibited in the usual form, it is given by De Wette as follows :—

1. The original Aramaic Gospel, ( $\aleph$ ).
2. A translation of it into Greek, ( $\aleph$ ).
3. An edition of this work with smaller and larger additions, ( $\aleph + \alpha + \Delta$ ).

4. Another edition with other similar additions, ( $\aleph + \beta + B$ .)

5. An edition blending both the former, and which became the foundation of Mark, ( $\aleph + \alpha + A + \beta + B$ .)

6. An edition with a greater number of additions like  $\alpha + A$ , which formed the foundation of Matthew, ( $\aleph + \alpha + A + \gamma + \Gamma 1$ .)

7. An edition with a greater number of additions like  $\beta + B$ , and also including the additions  $\gamma + \Gamma 1$ , which formed the foundation of Luke, ( $\aleph + \beta + B + \gamma + \Gamma 1$ .)

8. Besides this, Matthew and Luke availed themselves of yet another original Gospel  $\beth$ , their common but independent use of which accounts for the passages ( $\Gamma 2$ ) which they both possess beyond Mark, but which they respectively arrange in a different order.

It was fondly imagined by its author that this intricate hypothesis sufficed to account for all the phenomena of verbal agreement and disagreement presented by the Gospels; but how little he persuaded others to take this favourable view of his labours was soon apparent. Dr Hales, for example, having quoted a statement of Bishop Marsh to the effect that "in translating from Hebrew into Greek, there is still less probability of agreeing by *mere accident* than in translating from Greek into English, because the Greek language admits of much greater variety both in the choice and the position of the words than the English language," subjoins, "Thus we are indebted to the learned and ingenious author of this Dissertation for a plain and simple refutation of his own abstruse and complicated hypothesis in all its parts; satisfactory as it should seem to every unprejudiced and unbiassed critic." \*

\* Hales's "Analysis of Chronology," iii., p. 8.

But the work of elaboration and improvement was not yet completed. Eichhorn had still to expand to its full dimensions his own original proposal, as now amended and developed by Marsh. Dissatisfied, as would appear, with the explanations and additions of the English bishop, Eichhorn set himself anew to a further extension of his hypothesis; and adopting from Marsh the idea of a common Greek translation of the original Aramaic Gospel, as absolutely necessary in order to account for the remarkable verbal coincidences of the evangelists, he at last proposed his scheme for reconciling all difficulties as follows:—

1. The original Aramaic Gospel.
2. A Greek translation of this.
3. A revised edition of the original Gospel employed by Matthew, (A.)
4. A Greek translation of this edition, based upon the Greek translation of the original Gospel.
5. A revised edition of the original Gospel, untranslated into Greek, made use of by Luke, (B.)
6. A mixed edition of A. and B. still untranslated into Greek, employed by Mark, (C.)
7. A fourth edition of the original Gospel, employed by Matthew and Luke, in places where they agree with one another and differ from Mark, (D.)
8. A Greek translation of this fourth edition, influenced by (2) the Greek translation of the original Gospel.
9. The Hebrew Gospel of Matthew arising from a union of A. and D., (E.)
10. The Greek translation of Matthew modified by the already existing Greek translation of A. and D.
11. A+B (=C) formed the foundation of Mark's

Gospel ; and Mark, in translating from these sources, used the already existing translation of A., but so far as he used B. had himself to translate it into the Greek language.

12. B+D (=F) gave rise to Luke's Gospel ; but independently of these, there was inserted the account of a journey. In translating into Greek, Luke used the existing translation of D., but as respected B. had himself to make the translation.

Beyond this the critical imagination could not be expected to go ; and accordingly, no later attempts have been made in the direction followed by Eichhorn and Marsh. But the practice of system-building still continues in other forms, although with equally fruitless results.\* Either on the ground (1) that one or two of the Gospels were taken from one another ; or (2) that all three were derived from some common source either written or traditional, or both ; or (3) that the writers not only used each other's works, but had access, at the same time, to common sources,—critics still labour at the Sisyphean toil of constructing theories, in order to solve this obstinate and perplexing problem. In our own day, De Wette, Hug, Ewald, Guericke, Gieseler, Norton, Davidson, Thiersch, Alford, Smith of Jordanhill, and many others, have all proposed their several schemes of explanation and agreement ; but, as Dr Tregelles remarks, “the more recent theories on the subject of the harmonising Gospels, are in general only repetitions of former schemes with or without new modifications.”† And after all the at-

\* The latest attempt is one by *Weiss* in the “*Studien und Kritiken*,” 1861, in my judgment as unsuccessful as any of its predecessors.

† *Horne's* “*Introduction*,” iv., p. 664.



tempts which have been made, the problem appears at this moment to remain as far from solution as ever.\*

In these circumstances, it is with no small diffidence that I presume to make another contribution to the chaos of opinions that have already been collected on this subject. But the argument pursued in the preceding pages does, I believe, clearly point to the much-desired solution. I am firmly convinced that, as in the Ptolemæan system of the heavens it was *human speculation* which had introduced difficulty and complexity among God's works, while, in truth, their motions were all regulated with a beautiful simplicity, so here it is *criticism itself* which has caused the perplexity in connexion with the Divine Word, while, in fact, the phenomena which it presents may all be explained in the easiest and simplest manner. With this conviction, I venture to offer another hypothesis on this much-vexed subject; and, in doing so, it is no small satisfaction to reflect that the theory about to be stated is distinguished, at least, by its simplicity, that it needs no algebraic signs in order to make it intelligible, but that it may be set in a single short sentence before the reader, with the assurance that he cannot fail to *understand* it, whether or not he may also be induced to *adopt* it.

My hypothesis, then, is simply this:—*The Lord Jesus Christ SPOKE IN GREEK, and the evangelists*

\* Credner, after reviewing, with his usual fulness and clearness, the various leading hypotheses, and expressing himself dissatisfied with every one of them, adds:—"Bei vielen hat die Ansicht Eingang gefunden, dass das genetische Verhältniss unserer drei Evangelien überall unerklärlich sei, ja, Manche haben sogar ein Werk der Vorsehung in dieser Unerklärbarkeit erkennen wollen. Andere begnügten sich, die bisherige Versuche, dieses Verhältniss zu erklären, als unbefriedigend zu bezeichnen."—*Einl.*, § 73.

*independently narrated His actions and reported His discourses IN THE SAME LANGUAGE which He had Himself employed.*

This theory I propose as adequate to account for *all* the phenomena presented by the first three Gospels, and thus, as marked out by its sufficiency no less than by its simplicity, from all those that have preceded it. However ingenious some of these may have appeared, they have neither been simple nor sufficient, and while, from their complexity, destitute of all *primâ facie* probability, the least practical application which has been made of them has shewn that they could not meet the requirements of the case.

It will be observed that two perplexing elements, which enter into the statement of the problem as most have dealt with it, are at once eliminated from it by the theory which I have proposed. These are, *First*, that our Lord spoke usually in Hebrew, so that our present Greek Gospels must, for the most part, be regarded as containing translations of His words ; and, *Secondly*, that St Matthew wrote originally in Hebrew, and that, accordingly, the existing Greek Gospel which bears his name must be dealt with as a version of his work. The complexity thus introduced into the question is enormous, and we cannot wonder that, with these two ideas assumed as facts, and admitted as elements in the problem to be solved, critics should have been so sorely puzzled by the *data* with which they were furnished, and should scarcely, in any case, have been able to do more than demolish the theories of their predecessors, without in any measure succeeding in establishing their own.

The hypothesis which I have announced, and which

I now proceed to illustrate, simple and obvious as it appears, has never, so far as I am aware, been heretofore suggested.\* This fact increases the hesitation which I feel in proposing it, and suggests the fear that, like many others which have preceded it, it may possess attractions and advantages only in the estimation of its author, while none but he will be blind to its imperfections. But it is with confidence, nevertheless, that I submit it to the candid consideration of all that are interested in this important subject. No small vantage-ground in its favour has been gained in the preceding chapters, if I have there succeeded, on other grounds, in proving that our Lord did, for the most part, make use of the Greek language; and if now we find that the theory of the origin of the Gospels which assumes that fact, explains difficulties which cannot otherwise be removed, we may, in that case, not only regard the hypothesis itself as established, but may view it as, in a new and very striking manner, imparting to the former proposition all the force and evidence of demonstration.

There are two conditions which must be fulfilled by

\* In my former work, I here referred in a note to a "Chapter on the Harmonising Gospels," mentioned by Alford in the Prolegomena to the first vol. of his New Testament, as perhaps suggesting a similar theory of the origin of the Gospels to that which I have proposed. I had not then seen the able and interesting paper referred to, but my attention was soon directed to it by a friendly reviewer, as contained in the *Journal of Sacred Literature*, April 1857. The hypothesis proposed by the writer of that paper (the late Duke of Manchester) makes a nearer approach than any other I have met with to that of this work. But there is still a great difference between the two. This will be at once apparent to the reader from the fact that the noble and learned writer merely maintains (p. 66) that "*many* of our Lord's labours and discourses must have been where the Greek language and not the Aramaic prevailed," and even expresses his opinion (p. 71) that "Aramaic was the language which prevailed in Bethsaida" of Galilee.

any theory proposed on this subject, before it can be deemed successful ; it must afford a satisfactory explanation, both of the *coincidences* and the *differences* observable in the first three Gospels. It is quite possible to effect the one object, while overlooking or missing the other ; but unless *both* are aimed at and attained, the real difficulties of the case have not been faced, and the problem must still be regarded as unsolved.

The coincidences naturally first attract our notice ; and by these, therefore, in the first place, I shall endeavour to test and illustrate the value of my hypothesis. As every one knows, these coincidences are very numerous and striking. They are perceptible in every part of the first three evangelists, so far as the writers deal with the same topics, or cover the same ground. But it is to be observed that they are *most notable by far in reports of what was SAID either by the Saviour or others*. And this is a point to which I beg to direct special attention, as bearing very materially upon the success of our present argument. The fact itself has often been remarked, and is indeed generally referred to by writers on the subject ; but its great importance in the question now under discussion warrants and requires that it should here be somewhat more fully considered. Before proceeding, therefore, to the application which I mean to make of it, I shall state it in the words of two eminent critics, and shall bring forward some of the examples in proof of it which are to be found in the writings of the evangelists.

“All the three,” says Credner, “frequently agree in their expressions, and that in such a manner that sections which, at the beginning, manifest much diver-



gence, become more and more alike as they approach the principal topic ; while in regard to this leading subject they exhibit *a verbal identity, particularly in the words of Jesus*, and, most of all, in prophecies or maxims, and then begin again to diverge more or less from one another." In illustration of what is here stated, I may quote the following passages :—

MATT. viii. 2, 3.

Καὶ ἰδοὺ, λεπρὸς ἑλθὼν προσεκύνει αὐτῷ, λέγων· Κύριε, ἐὰν θέλῃς, δύνασαι με καθαρίσαι. Καὶ ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα, ἥψατο αὐτοῦ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, λέγων· Θέλω, καθαρίσθητι. Καὶ εὐθέως ἐκαθαρίσθη αὐτοῦ ἡ λέπρα.

MARK i. 40-42.

Καὶ ἔρχεται πρὸς αὐτὸν λεπρὸς, παρακαλῶν αὐτὸν, καὶ γοιυπετῶν αὐτὸν, καὶ λέγων αὐτῷ· "Ὅτι ἐὰν θέλῃς, δύνασαι με καθαρίσαι. Ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς σπλαγχνισθεὶς, ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα, ἥψατο αὐτοῦ, καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· Θέλω, καθαρίσθητι. Καὶ εἰπόντος αὐτοῦ, εὐθέως ἀπῆλθεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἡ λέπρα, καὶ ἐκαθαρίσθη.

LUKE v. 12, 13.

Καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ εἶναι αὐτὸν ἐν μιᾷ τῶν πύλειων, καὶ ἰδοὺ, ἀνὴρ πλήρης λέπρας· καὶ ἰδὼν τὸν Ἰησοῦν, πεσὼν ἐπὶ πρὸσωπον, ἐδεήθη αὐτοῦ, λέγων· Κύριε, ἐὰν θέλῃς, δύνασαι με καθαρίσαι. Καὶ ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα, ἥψατο αὐτοῦ, εἰπὼν· Θέλω, καθαρίσθητι. Καὶ εὐθέως ἡ λέπρα ἀπῆλθεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ.

MATT. ix. 5, 6.

Τί γάρ ἐστιν εὐκοπώτερον, εἰπεῖν· Ἀφένωνταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι· ἢ εἰπεῖν· Ἐγείραι καὶ περιπάτει ; Ἴνα δὲ εἰδῇτε ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας· (τότε λέγει τῷ παραλυτικῷ) Ἐγερθεὶς ἄρῃ σου τὴν κλίνην, καὶ ὑπάγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου.

MARK ii. 9-11.

Τί ἐστιν εὐκοπώτερον, εἰπεῖν τῷ παραλυτικῷ· Ἀφένωνταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι· ἢ εἰπεῖν· Ἐγείραι, καὶ ἄρῃ σου τὸν κρᾶββατον, καὶ περιπάτει ; Ἴνα δὲ εἰδῇτε ὅτε ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀφιέναι ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἁμαρτίας· (λέγει τῷ παραλυτικῷ) Σοὶ λέγω, ἔγειραι, καὶ ἄρῃ τὸν κρᾶββατον, σου, καὶ ὑπάγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου.

LUKE v. 23, 24.

Τί ἐστιν εὐκοπώτερον, εἰπεῖν· Ἀφένωνταί σοι αἱ ἁμαρτίαι σου· ἢ εἰπεῖν· Ἐγείραι καὶ περιπάτει ; Ἴνα δὲ εἰδῇτε ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας, (εἶπε τῷ παραλυμένῳ) Σοὶ λέγω, ἔγειραι· καὶ ἄρας τὸ κλινιδιόν σου, πορεύου εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου.

MATTH. xix. 23, 24.

Ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ· Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὅτι δυσκόλως πλούσιος εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν. Πάλιν δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν, εὐκοπώτερόν ἐστι κάμηλον διὰ τρυπήματος ῥαφίδος διελθεῖν, ἢ πλούσιον εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰσελθεῖν.

MARK x. 23-25.

Καὶ περιβλεψάμενος ὁ Ἰησοῦς, λέγει τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ· Πῶς δυσκόλως οἱ τὰ χρήματα ἔχοντες εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰσελεύσονται. Οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ ἐθαμβοῦντο ἐπὶ τοῖς λόγοις αὐτοῦ· Ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς πάλιν ἀποκριθεὶς, λέγει αὐτοῖς· Τέκνα, πῶς δύσκολόν ἐστι τοὺς πεποιθότας ἐπὶ τοῖς χρήμασιν, εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰσελθεῖν; Εὐκοπώτερόν ἐστι κάμηλον διὰ τῆς τρυμαλιᾶς τῆς ῥαφίδος εἰσελθεῖν, ἢ πλούσιον εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰσελθεῖν.

LUKE xviii. 24, 25.

Ἰδὼν δὲ αὐτὸν ὁ Ἰησοῦς περιλυπὸν γένόμενον, εἶπε· Πῶς δυσκόλως οἱ τὰ χρήματα ἔχοντες εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ. Εὐκοπώτερον γάρ ἐστι κάμηλον διὰ τρυμαλιᾶς ῥαφίδος εἰσελθεῖν, ἢ πλούσιον εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰσελθεῖν.

MATTH. xxiv. 15-17.

Ὅταν οὖν ἴδῃτε τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως, τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Δανιὴλ τοῦ προφήτου ἐστὼς ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ· (ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοείτω) Τότε οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ φευγέτωσαν ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη· Ὁ ἐπὶ τοῦ δώματος, μὴ καταβανέτω ἀγαί τι ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας αὐτοῦ·

MARK xiii. 14, 15.

Ὅταν δὲ ἴδῃτε τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως, τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ Δανιὴλ τοῦ προφήτου, ἐστὸς ὅπου οὐ δεῖ· (ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοείτω) τότε οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ φευγέτωσαν εἰς τὰ ὄρη· Ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ δώματος, μὴ καταβάτω εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν μηδὲ εἰσελθέτω ἀγαί τι ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας αὐτοῦ.

LUKE xxi. 20, 21.

Ὅταν δὲ ἴδῃτε κυκλομένην ὑπὸ στρατοπέδῳ τὴν Ἱερουσαλήμ, τότε γινώτε ὅτι ἤγγικεν ἡ ἐρήμωσις αὐτῆς. Τότε οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ φευγέτωσαν εἰς τὰ ὄρη· καὶ οἱ ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῆς ἐκχωρείτωσαν· καὶ οἱ ἐν ταῖς χώραις, μὴ εἰσερχέσθωσαν εἰς αὐτήν.

Many similar examples might be quoted,\* but the

\* See the columns of parallel passages as given in the ordinary Greek harmonies—*Robinson's*, *Stroud's*, or others.

above, taken almost at random, are sufficient for our present purpose. The striking verbal coincidences which they exhibit as existing between the three evangelists are at once apparent, and it will be noticed, as Credner states, that these are by far most marked and exact in reports of our Lord's *words*, or of the *words* of others. It will also be observed, as in the first example, that, with considerable variation both before and afterwards, the address of the leprous man to Christ, and our Lord's reply to him, are given in exactly the same terms by all the three evangelists.

Let me now quote a passage from an American critic who has devoted a great deal of attention to this subject, and it will be seen that he brings out exactly the same thing, accompanied, however, by some further valuable remarks. In his work on the Gospels, Professor Norton writes as follows :—

“The occurrence of passages verbally the same, or strikingly coincident in the use of many of the same words, which appearances I shall denote by the term *verbal coincidence*, or *verbal agreement*, particularly demands attention. . . . By far the larger portion of this verbal agreement is found in the recital of *the words* of Jesus. Thus, in Matthew's Gospel, the passages verbally coincident with one or both of the other two Gospels, amount to less than a sixth part of its contents, and of this, about *seven-eighths* occur in the recital of the words of others, and only about *one-eighth* in what, by way of distinction, I may call mere narrative, in which the evangelist, speaking in his own person, was unrestrained in the choice of his expressions. In Mark, the proportion of coincident passages to the whole contents of the Gospel is only about one-

sixth, of which not *one-fifth* occurs in the narrative. Luke has still less agreement of expression with the other evangelists. The proportion in which it is found amounts only to about a tenth part of his Gospel, and but an inconsiderable portion of it appears in the narrative, in which there are very few instances of its existence for more than half-a-dozen words together. In the narrative, it may be computed as less than a *twentieth* part.

“These definite proportions are important, as shewing distinctly in how small a part of each Gospel there is any verbal coincidence with either of the other two, and to how great a degree such coincidence is confined to passages in which the evangelists professedly *give the words of others*, particularly of Jesus.” \*

Such, then, is the state of matters in regard to the verbal coincidences existing in the first three Gospels. They are by far most numerous and most striking in those passages which report the words of others, and particularly the words of Christ himself. Let us now apply the hypothesis which has been proposed to the explanation of these facts, and see whether or not it will prove sufficient.

Jesus, I believe, spoke in Greek, and the evangelists professedly report His words in the same language. Would we not expect, then, in such a case, that there should be striking verbal coincidences among them? It is plain that it could not be otherwise, provided they were duly qualified for the task which they had undertaken. Here are three writers all professing to give us a report of what the Saviour uttered, and all, as I believe, writing in the language which He

\* *Norton's* “Genuineness of the Gospels,” i., 240.



employed—it follows then, of course, that if they were well-informed, they must often strikingly agree in what they relate. The only thing that could hinder verbal coincidences, would be a defect in the fulness or correctness of their information, and the existence of such coincidences (supposing them independent writers) is the most complete and decisive proof of their accurate knowledge which could be conceived. And it would, of course, be in reports of what was *said* by our Lord and others that they would be most of all expected to agree; there might, and would necessarily, be differences in the narrative portions, though in these also, from various causes, we would naturally expect occasional agreement. Two or more reporters in our own day giving an account of a public meeting would, of necessity, agree chiefly and verbally in their statements of what was *said*; in their descriptions of the scene, the order of events, and the effects produced on the individuals present, they would as naturally differ to a considerable extent, yet also, probably, to some extent verbally agree. Thus it is with our evangelists. The far larger proportion of their coincidences is to be found in what they *report*, a small portion only in what they *narrate*. And this is exactly what we would expect from those who were competent to give us a history of our Saviour. That the writers of our Gospels were thus competent, appears not only from their works, but from what we know of themselves. Matthew, as an apostle, was himself a witness of the things which he related; Mark, as is almost universally admitted, wrote under the eye of the apostle Peter, who also was one of those who were present “all the time that the

Lord Jesus went in and out" among His disciples ; and Luke, as he expressly tells us, "had accurately traced out all the facts of the evangelic history from the beginning," and thus, if not himself an eye or ear witness, had taken care to obtain his information from such as were so, and then carefully to arrange it in the narrative which he composed.\*

Thus, then, on the theory of this work—that our Lord Jesus Christ *spoke* in Greek, and that St Matthew, St Mark, and St Luke *all wrote* in Greek—there is no difficulty whatever in accounting for the verbal agreement in our first three Gospels. The difficulty would rather have arisen had the fact been otherwise. If the evangelists were qualified to write a history of Christ at all, and to give us an account of His discourses ; still more, if, as I believe, they wrote under the influence of the Holy Spirit of promise, who guided their thoughts, and strengthened their memories, while at the same time their own minds were allowed full play, and their own special endowments and acquirements employed—if these things were so, it could not have been otherwise, than that they should frequently concur in the use of words and phrases, and all the more so if these happened, as originally spoken, to be of a striking or unusual character.

\* In exact and beautiful harmony with what we know of the writers is the amount of verbal coincidence which exists between them. St Luke, as not having himself been an auditor of the discourses which he reports, and as having been the constant companion of St Paul, who was not one of the personal attendants of our Lord, does not nearly so often agree with the other evangelists as St Matthew and St Mark do with one another. The first evangelist, again, as being himself an apostle, and the second as the associate of St Peter, had the best means of knowing and being able to report the *ipsissima verba* of our Saviour. Compare, in illustration, the last example of coincidence quoted above.

The only possible difficulty which I can imagine any one still to feel in connexion with the hypothesis which I have proposed, is how to account for those verbal coincidences which occur in the properly *narrative* portion of the three evangelists. These coincidences, as stated above, are comparatively few, and do not generally extend beyond a few words. The “most remarkable example” of this kind of harmony is the following in Matt. xiv. 19 ; Mark vi. 41 ; and Luke ix. 16 ; in all which passages we find the words, λαβὼν τοὺς πέντε ἄρτους καὶ τοὺς δύο ἰχθύας ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εὐλόγησε. When it is considered that this is really the only case in which the three evangelists coincide for more than a few words in the narrative part of the Gospels, I do not think that any reader will be inclined to attach much importance to the point which I have nevertheless thought it right to notice. For, even if such coincidences had been far more numerous and striking than they are, there is an explanation which can be given, that appears completely to remove any difficulty which may thus be felt. We learn from the Book of Acts that the apostles continued preaching and teaching in Jerusalem for a lengthened period after the ascension of the Saviour. And that being the case, the narrative which they gave of our Lord’s life and discourses would of necessity soon assume a fixed and definite form such as appears in the synoptical Gospels. And while, as we have seen, the similarities would naturally be most frequent and striking in what they in common reported, it could not but happen that they would also occasionally agree in the terms which were employed in mere narration. We find then, in the consideration which has just been suggested, an ex-

planation, not only of the remarkable fact that it is for the most part the *same events* in our Lord's life which are dwelt upon by the first three evangelists, but also of the point now more immediately before us, that they sometimes verbally agree in the manner of their *narrating* them. Some writers who differ essentially from the views which I maintain as to the language generally employed by our Lord and His apostles, as well as regarding the language in which St Matthew wrote his Gospel, and who must therefore have much greater difficulty in accounting for the phenomenon in question, have nevertheless expressed themselves satisfied with the above explanation. Thus, Professor Norton remarks—"The twelve apostles, who were companions of our Saviour, resided together at Jerusalem, we know not for how long a period, certainly for several years; acting and preaching in concert. This being the case, they would confer together continually; they would be present at each other's discourses, in which the events of their Master's life were related; they would in common give instruction respecting His history and doctrine to new converts, especially to those who were to go forth as missionaries. From all these circumstances, their modes of narrating the same events would become assimilated to each other." \*

This consideration easily and completely relieves the hypothesis which I have proposed of every difficulty, however little, as we shall soon see, it can be regarded as helping those who, like Professor Norton, both suppose that the apostles generally spoke in Aramaic, and that St Matthew's Gospel was originally written in that language. On the ground maintained

\* "Genuineness of the Gospels," i, p. 288.



in this work, that the disciples, like their Master, almost always spoke in *Greek*, and that St Matthew, as well as the other evangelists, *wrote* in that language, there is no difficulty, but the opposite, in conceiving that certain forms of expression became stereotyped, so to speak, in the narrative so frequently repeated by the apostles, and were thus naturally adopted in common by the writers of our first three Gospels.

But introduce, now, the idea of Christ having spoken in one language, and the evangelists having written in another, or, what amounts to the same thing, of our present Gospel of St Matthew being a translation instead of an original work, and instant and insuperable difficulty arises. The question, then, is how to account for the (in that case) truly marvellous coincidences of words and phrases which occur in the first three Gospels. These cannot be attributed either to accident or inspiration. Accident, as every one knows, scarcely ever leads to identity of expression among different writers. They may often concur in the thoughts, but rarely indeed in the form which their thoughts assume. "It has been noted," observes a writer in the *Athenæum*, "that Terence says, 'I præsequar,' and that some modern dramatists have hit on, 'Go before, I'll follow.' This is, perhaps, nearly the utmost extent to which different writers fall on the same collocations of words, from five or six at a time," while, as a glance is sufficient to prove, there are whole paragraphs in the first three Gospels which are marked by an almost exact coincidence of phraseology. And if accident will not explain the striking verbal agreements in our first three Gospels, it is still worse to

seek any aid in this matter from *inspiration*. Inspiration will never account for needless miracles. And here, if there was no natural foundation in the actual circumstances of the writers for the coincidences which appear among them, the miracles must have been as countless as they were unnecessary. Enough, then, of these first two causes, and there remain only two other suppositions possible, if the hypothesis which I have proposed be not accepted. These are, either the Urevangelium or original-Gospel theory of Eichhorn and Marsh, or, if that be rejected, the hypothesis that the evangelists *copied* from one another.

And this latter, accordingly, is the expedient which, in one form or another, the maintainers of the Hebrew original of Matthew's Gospel, who reject the former theory, are compelled to adopt. Thus says Mill, (Proleg. in N. T., 109,) "*Factâ collatione singulorum utriusque evangelii, quæ quidem idem argumentum tractant, capitum, inevitabili plane necessitate coactus sum ut credam ne quidem aliter fieri potuisse, quin Marcus qui cum Matthæo in plurimis exacte, ac veluti ad verbum, convenit, Matthæi evangelium habuerit ad manum cum suum appareret.*" Again, he remarks, with respect to the Gospel of St Luke, (§ 116,) "*Certe evulgatum fuisse illud, post editionem evangeliorum Matt. et Mar. ex collatione trium horum inter se luce clarius apparet. Nihil scilicet evidentius quam D. Lucam evangelium Matt. et Mar. ipsas ῥήσεις, phrases, ac locutiones,—imo vero, totas periochas in suum nonnunquam ἀντολεξεί traduxisse.*" Examples are then brought forward.

It is perfectly certain, then, by their own confession, that the defenders of the ordinary view as to the lan-

guage generally employed by our Lord and His apostles, and of the Hebrew original of St Matthew, are compelled, in order to give any account of the numerous verbal coincidences between our present Greek Gospels, either to rest in some such hypothesis as that of Eichhorn, or to suppose that the evangelists copied from each other. We have already seen the strong language used in support of the one theory by the learned Professor Mill, and now let us hear the terms in which an eminent biblical scholar of our own day speaks of the other. "It seems to me" says Cureton,\* "that no candid person who is sufficiently acquainted with the language and the subject, after having fully entered into the examination, can fail to acquiesce in the conclusion arrived at by Bishop Marsh, that '*The table of parallel and coincident passages,*' as shewn in his dissertation, '*is one continued proof either that the Hebrew text of St Matthew was the basis of the Gospels of St Mark and St Luke, or that some common document,*' that is, Hebrew or Aramaic, '*was the basis of all three Gospels.*'" I leave it to the advocates of the opinion that our Lord and His apostles generally made use of Hebrew, and that St Matthew composed his Gospel in that language, to make choice between these two alternatives; but one or other of them they *must* adopt in order to give any explanation of the coincidences which have been mentioned. This has been felt and acknowledged by themselves as we have already seen, and as will afterwards again appear, although, as we shall also have occasion to notice, some holding the views in question, have either not perceived, or have striven to evade, the necessity which these views entail

\* "Syriac Gospels," p. xc.

upon them, in seeking to solve the problem of the origin of the Gospels.

If, then, on the one hand, they make choice of the original-Gospel theory, there is not a single word required in order to shew the untenableness of their position. The mere illustrations of that theory which were given at the beginning of this chapter must be quite sufficient to overthrow it. Indeed, so palpable are its improbabilities, and so evident its defects that, as De Wette remarks, one can only wonder how it should have formerly met with so much approbation.\*

If, again, on the other hand, they choose to maintain that the evangelists copied from one another, and in this way account for the *coincidences* which appear among them, the question instantly occurs, how the *differences*, which are equally striking, are then to be explained. As before remarked, every sufficient hypothesis must furnish a satisfactory account both of the differences and the coincidences; and if it fails with regard to one of these, it fails entirely. Whatever theory, then, is proposed upon this subject, must be tested by the diversities apparent in the first three Gospels as well as by their agreements; and although sufficient to account for the one class of phenomena must still be pronounced wanting in an essential requisite to completeness, if it offers no satisfactory explanation of the other.

It has already been proved that the hypothesis which I have proposed fully accounts for the coincidences;

\* "Dass man sich jetzt fast nur wundern kann, wie diese Hypothese früherhin so vielen Beifall finden konnte."—*Eint.*, § 85. The writer of the article "Gospels," in *Smith's* "Dictionary of the Bible," observes that "this elaborate hypothesis, whether in the form given it by Marsh or Eichhorn, possesses almost every fault that can be charged against an argument of that kind."



and now, a very few words will be sufficient to shew, that it also affords a full explanation of the divergencies. I assume that the three evangelists were all well-informed on the subject on which they wrote, and that they were all under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in composing their works. But I also hold that they were free and independent writers, of different talents, habits, and tendencies, and, to a certain extent, having a different purpose in view in the publication of their Gospels. It follows, of course, that in such a case, while there will be much agreement, there must also be no small diversity; and that the narrative portions especially will be marked by many little variations, since in these parts the several writers had full scope to manifest their own special characters and attainments. And so, as need scarcely be remarked, the case really stands. Let the reader only look back for a moment to the second example quoted in illustration of the coincidences, and he will at once perceive various little diversities. Mark appears, as usual, the most descriptive and particular; Matthew and Luke, with a very close general agreement, yet vary in several of their expressions; while, as may be noticed, all the evangelists differ in the terms which they use respectively for "bed," Matthew having κλίνη, Mark κράββατος, and Luke κλινίδιον. The theory which I have advanced leaves abundant room for such diversities, and would, indeed, lead us to expect them. Its explanation of these little differences is as *simple* as that which has already been given of the coincidences. And this of itself seems no small recommendation. If Copernicus was led by a felt want of simplicity and symmetry in the Ptolemaic system of the heavens to question its cor-

rectness,\* so may we be led to doubt the validity of those complex theories which have been formed to account for the phenomena presented by the Gospels. God's Word, we may expect, will, like His works, be characterised by simplicity. On this ground, then, I conceive that the theory I have proposed has at once a strong claim on favourable consideration. And it is proved by actual test *satisfactory* as well as simple ; for not only does it fulfil the one condition of accounting for the coincidences, but equally satisfies the other of explaining the differences, and thus is found in every application of it entirely sufficient.

But what shall be said of these divergences on the theory that the evangelists made use of each other's works,—a theory to which, as one of two alternatives, the advocates of a Hebrew original of St Matthew's Gospel are, by their own confession, compelled to have recourse? It has been clearly shewn, by several recent writers, that no satisfactory account *can* be given of the differences in the Gospels, if it be supposed that the writers copied from one another. "There is" remarks Professor Norton,† "no reasonable principle of selection on which they can be supposed to have proceeded. They were all of them, as preachers of Christianity, well acquainted with the transactions which it was their purpose to record ; their independent knowledge of them appears in the Gospel of each ; they had therefore no occasion to copy one from another ; and it is a fact, obvious simply upon inspection, that far the greater part of each Gospel

\* Comp. *Max Müller's* "Lectures on Language," p. 19.

† "Genuineness of the Gospels," i., pp. 251-263.

was not thus copied. And lastly, their Gospels generally, and even those very passages on which this theory of transcription has been founded, present numerous diversities of such a character as the evangelist, whichever may be supposed the copyist, would not have made, with the text of his predecessor or predecessors before him as an archetype." It might suffice to refer in proof of the truth of these remarks to the passages of the Greek Gospels formerly quoted ; but I may here adduce the following additional illustration from the narrative of the Transfiguration as given by the three evangelists (T. R.) :—

MATT. xvii. 4.

MARK ix. 5, 6.

LUKE ix. 33.

Ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Πέ-  
τρος, εἶπε τῷ Ἰησοῦ·  
Κύριε, καλὸν ἐστὶν ἡμῶς  
ὧδε εἶναι· εἰ θέλεις,  
ποιήσωμεν ὧδε τρεῖς  
σκηνάς, σοὶ μίαν, καὶ  
Μωσῇ μίαν, καὶ μίαν  
Ἠλίας.

Καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ  
Πέτρος, λέγει τῷ Ἰησοῦ·  
Ῥαββί, καλὸν ἐστὶν  
ἡμῶς ὧδε εἶναι· καὶ  
ποιήσωμεν σκηνάς τρεῖς,  
σοὶ μίαν, καὶ Μωσεῖ  
μίαν, καὶ Ἠλίας μίαν.  
Οὐ γὰρ ἤδεις τί λα-  
λήσῃ· ἥσαν γὰρ ἔκ-  
φοβοι.

Καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ  
διαχωρίζεσθαι αὐτοὺς  
ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, εἶπεν ὁ  
Πέτρος πρὸς τὸν Ἰη-  
σοῦν· Ἐπιστάτα, καλὸν  
ἐστὶν ἡμῶς ὧδε εἶναι·  
καὶ ποιήσωμεν σκηνάς  
τρεῖς, μίαν σοι, καὶ  
Μωσεῖ μίαν, καὶ μίαν  
Ἠλίας· μὴ εἰδὼς ὃ  
λέγει.

It will be here observed, that while all the three evangelists agree exactly (with a slight difference of order) in the words which they ascribe to Peter, each uses a different appellative as that by which the apostle addressed the Saviour. Matthew has *Κύριε*, Mark *Ῥαββί*, and Luke *Ἐπιστάτα*. Here, as in other similar cases, there can be little doubt that St Mark preserves the exact expression which was employed, while the other two, according to their several tendencies, represent it by Greek equivalents. But how impossible

does it seem, if the evangelists made use of each other's works, that they would have followed one another so closely, and yet differed slightly in the order of the words which they adopt, and in the term of address which they represent St Peter as having made use of towards the Saviour!\*

Yet, notwithstanding the language which has been quoted from Professor Norton, in opposition to the copying hypothesis, it is instructive to notice that he is himself, after all, driven in some measure to adopt it. This necessity is entailed upon him by his upholding the opinion that St Matthew wrote at first in Hebrew. "We *cannot account*" he admits, "for the remarkable coincidence of language between our Greek translation of Matthew and the other Gospels, but by the supposition that the translator, through his familiarity with them, was led to *adopt their expressions* when suitable to his purpose."† The same admission and supposition are made by Dr Davidson in dealing with this subject. After following much the same course of argument as Professor Norton with regard to the hypothesis that one of the evangelists copied from

\* This theory of the mutual interdependence of the three evangelists has been presented in every possible form. There is no longer a chance of imparting the least appearance of novelty to the hypothesis, left to any one who may be inclined to adopt it. This will be plain from the following statement of the various opinions which have been held as to the *order* in which the evangelists wrote :—

1. Matthew, Mark, Luke—Grotius, Mill, Greswell, &c.
2. Matthew, Luke, Mark—Griesbach, De Wette, &c.
3. Mark, Matthew, Luke—Storr and Smith of Jordanhill.
4. Mark, Luke, Matthew—Weisse, Wilke, Hitzig, &c.
5. Luke, Matthew, Mark—Büsching and Evanson.
6. Luke, Mark, Matthew—Vögel.

See *Alford*, vol. i., Proleg., p. 3; and comp. *Credner*, "Einl.," § 69, or *Davidson*, "Introd.," i., p. 387.

† "Genuineness of the Gospels," i., 298.



another, and after endeavouring, also, in much the same way, to shew how the coincidences may possibly be explained on other grounds, he at last candidly admits, that all the considerations which he has brought forward "*are not sufficient of themselves to account for the remarkable coincidences.*"\* He therefore is compelled, as we have seen is the case also with Norton, to try to eke out his argument by the additional supposition, that "the Greek translator of Matthew used the Gospels of Mark and Luke where the matter in the Aramæan was so like the matter of the two evangelists as to warrant its being rendered into corresponding or coincident language."

Now, all this just serves more clearly to illustrate the difficulties in which the defenders of the Hebrew original of St Matthew's Gospel, and of the opinion that our Lord usually spoke in Aramaic, are placed. Some of them, as Eichhorn and Marsh, must conjure up a phantom-Gospel, which they call a Urevangelium, and of which no traces whatever are found in antiquity. Others again, as Mill and Greswell, emphatically declare that the coincidences are in their view inexplicable, unless the two later writers saw and made use of the work of the first ; while others still, as Norton and Davidson, though much opposed to the copying theory in general, admit that they cannot dispense with it in the case of the fancied translator of St Matthew's Hebrew Gospel.

It is not my purpose so much to expose the weakness of former theories, as, if possible, to establish that which I have myself ventured to propose. I would fain be *constructive*, which is ever something higher

\* "Introduction to the New Testament," i., 411, &c.

and better than simply being *destructive*; and it has unfortunately been hitherto only too easy to overturn what had been previously advanced on the question before us, while a lamentable want has been felt of any hypothesis likely to endure. I deem it needless, therefore, to dwell at any length on the peculiar schemes of Norton and Davidson, which repudiate the copying theory so far as Mark and Luke are concerned, but hold to it with respect to our existing Matthew. I believe that if it be maintained, as these writers do maintain, that our Lord spoke in Aramaic, no possible explanation can be given of the wonderful coincidences which exist between even *two* of the evangelists. If Christ spoke in Aramaic, the same cause which led *Him* to do so, must have induced the *apostles*, while they remained in Jerusalem, for the most part, to continue the practice; and thus there would be no occasion for the production of that gradually stereotyped form of translation into Greek, by which it is sought to explain the striking phenomena of agreement. Indeed, as we have seen, one of the constant arguments employed by the defenders of the opinion that our Lord spoke in Hebrew is, that the speech of Paul to the multitude in that language (Acts xxii.) proves that *Hebrew* was still the most suitable language in which to address them.\* Now, this argument, if its validity be admitted, must prove that the apostles, while still in Jerusalem, would almost invariably have *spoken in Hebrew*; and thus, as has been said, a common Greek form of expression could not have arisen.

Independently of this, however, the theory of Norton

\* Comp. above, Part I., Chap. VIII., p. 292, &c.

and Davidson, is, after all, liable to the worst objections which have been brought against the copying hypothesis, as it is usually proposed. It has been strongly urged, and, in my humble judgment, clearly proved, by some recent able writers, that there is *no theory* of this kind which will comport with the ascription of due authority, or even strict honesty, to the evangelists,\* when all the phenomena presented by their works are considered. And that such a serious objection is applicable to the more than usually guarded theories of Norton and Davidson, who both dissent from such a view of the copying hypothesis as that adopted by Greswell and Mill, yet hold that our first Gospel at least was to some extent taken from the others, will, I think, become evident from carefully weighing the following considerations:—

The supposed translator of St Matthew's Gospel must of course have had the same *general* object in view as the writer of an original Gospel, viz., the further instruction and edification of professing Christians. He must have felt himself urged to the work which he undertook by a desire to add to the existing sources of knowledge already open to all who wished to inquire into the history and character of Jesus Christ. And, by the nature of the labour in which he engaged, he must have wished to convey to the world, in a language generally understood, the *peculiar* state-

\* For a forcible illustration of this statement, see *Alford's* "Greek Test.," vol. i., § 3. The learned writer concludes his remarks in the following terms:—"I do not see how any theory of mutual interdependence will leave to our three evangelists their credit as *able* or *trustworthy writers*; or even as *honest men*; nor can I find any such theory borne out by the nature of the variations apparent in the respective texts."

ments of St Matthew on this great subject. Now, how utterly inconsistent with such a purpose was it that the translator should have helped himself so freely, as we are told he has done, from Gospels already current in the Church ! To say nothing of the morality of such a proceeding, (a professed *translator* foisting into his work turns of expression which his author had never sanctioned, and which he himself had never translated,—a double deceit!) its folly must be at once apparent. If it was not *St Matthew's work* which he presented to the world, there was really no object to be served by his labours. St Mark and St Luke were *ex hypothesi* already well known ; and, if he were to help himself so liberally out of their works, as he *has* done, if the copying theory be true, then it is evident that he was not fulfilling the only purpose to be accomplished by his issuing a new Gospel at all. We find indeed much in our existing Gospel of St Matthew which is not contained in the other evangelists ; but on the supposition that it is a translation, there manifestly *ought to have been more*. The translator might have given us, in numberless cases, the special turns of thought or modes of expression employed by his author, and in undertaking a version of the apostle's work, he virtually pledged himself to do so ; but instead of that he has (on the supposition I am now combating) pilfered most unscrupulously from already existing narratives, and thus defeated, to a great extent, the object which he had in issuing a translation at all.

What, then, I ask with all deference, are the maintainers of the Hebrew original of St Matthew's Gospel to do ? To what side can they turn, and how will



they find a means of escape from the difficulties which encompass them with respect to this question as to the origin of the Gospels? On the one hand, there is presented to their acceptance the Urevangelium hypothesis, with all its "cycles and epicycles" of confusion and perplexity. On the other hand, the theory of mutual interdependence offers its aid, but only to entail difficulties and lead to consequences from which every honest heart and every reflecting mind instinctively shrink. It is admitted, and even *asserted*,\* by some of the most learned and thoughtful among themselves, that there is, on their ground, no other possible solution of the questions suggested by the Gospels than what is afforded by one or other of these suppositions. And, as we have seen, *both hypotheses* break down when subjected to a thorough examination. What then, I ask again, are they to do? how explain or defend their position? and by what yet untried ingenuity can they hope to succeed in dispersing those embarrassments which, as has been shewn, gather so closely and threateningly around them?

The favourite course, of late, seems to be that which has been adopted by Dr Tregelles. He scarcely

\* "Unless," says Cureton, "we admit the verbal inspiration of the Gospels, a theory long since abandoned by all scholars and critics, which, indeed, could only be maintained by those who are entirely ignorant of the way in which the New Testament has been transmitted to our own times, and which, if persisted in, must involve very serious objections against these inspired writings, and tend to infidelity, it is impossible to account for the close and even verbal coincidence of many parallel passages in the first three Gospels upon any other ground than that one evangelist *copied from the other*, or that they *all borrowed from a common source*."—*Syriac Gospels*, p. lxxxix. I make no comment on the statements contained in this passage; I merely beg most respectfully to suggest it to the attention of writers like Dr Tregelles.

*alludes* to the difficulties which have been so much felt and so frankly acknowledged by other writers holding the same opinion with him as to the language generally employed by our Lord, and as to the original language of St Matthew's Gospel. The following, so far as I am aware, are the only sentences which he has ever penned upon the subject; and let the reader observe how quietly he shelves the annoying questions which, like others, he was bound to face. Referring to the problem of the Gospels, he tells us,—“The general opinion of competent critics is that many of the actions and discourses of our Lord were early in oral circulation in a *somewhat definite form*; and that *this* is sufficient to account for the verbal coincidences which we find.”\* Who those competent critics are to whom he here refers, I am utterly at a loss to imagine. He names, indeed, Norton and Davidson, as if *these* were the critics intended; but *both* these, as we have seen, expressly admit that the cause which Dr Tregelles mentions is *not sufficient* to account for the coincidences. They both feel it necessary to conceive that St Matthew's translator *copied* from the other two Gospels; whether or not Dr Tregelles follows them in this does not clearly appear; but, if not, it would be satisfactory to know how he escapes from the necessity which has been felt and acknowledged by those “competent critics” on his own side of the question.†

\* *Tregelles* in “Horne's Introduction,” vol. iv., p. 664, &c.

† The same want of a thorough grappling with the difficulties of the question is observable in the chapter on “The Origin of the Gospels” in *Westcott's* recent valuable “Introduction.” In the article on the “Gospels” in *Smith's* “Dict.,” it is admitted, while the theory of Gieseler or Norton is approved, that “probably some places would best be

Again, he observes that, "It must also be remarked that elaborate theories quite leave out of sight the plenary inspiration of the evangelists; if *this* be remembered, it is difficult to suppose that these narratives could have originated from any mechanical accretion of materials; and if *this* be fully admitted, we may, while owning that verbal coincidences arose from the form that narratives had previously assumed, see that there was a definite reason why the different inspired writers varied in what they inserted, and in the manner in which it was connected. The four Gospels have respectively a varying scope, aspect and phase of instruction."

In this passage there comes out one of the most admirable features in the character of this eminent critic—his deep respect for the Word of God. It is delightful to find among us *one*, at least, who, while quite abreast of the most accomplished rationalist as regards scholarship, yet so constantly and emphatically expresses his reverence for Scripture as divinely-inspired truth. But, although rejoicing to agree with Dr Tregelles in the spirit evinced in the above extract, I cannot, at the same time, help remarking how clearly it reveals the weakness of his position in regard to the present question. He takes for granted that the "verbal coincidences" of the Gospels "arose from the form which narratives had previously assumed,"—a supposition which, as has been shewn, is utterly inadequate, *on his ground*, to account for these coincidences, and the inadequacy of which is freely *admitted* by the most strenuous upholders of the Hebrew ori-

explained" on the supposition of the evangelists making use of each other's works.

ginal of St Matthew. He also supposes that "the varying scope, aspect, and phase of instruction" presented by the several Gospels, furnish a definite reason for their varieties of phrase and arrangement. It is almost needless to remark on this, that there are numberless divergences in our first three Gospels which cannot be accounted for on these grounds—changes of words and clauses which have *no bearing whatever* on the respective "scope, aspect, and phase of instruction" of the three evangelists.

It is vain, moreover, to seek some assistance from the *inspiration* of the writers, as Dr Tregelles (if I understand him aright) seems inclined to do, in dealing with this subject. Inspiration ought never to be had recourse to in order to escape the difficulties which arise from mere human opinions. If a man ties a knot so tangled that he cannot again unloose it, it is little short of impiety to call in Divine aid in order to cut it. He must extricate himself from the difficulty in which he has become self-involved; and, if that be found impossible, he ought ingenuously to confess that the attempt is hopeless, and candidly acknowledge the error which he has committed.

In a word, the advocates of the Hebrew original of St Matthew are bound to face all the embarrassments which gather round their position. They must give some satisfactory account of the phenomena presented by our existing Gospels. These phenomena are plain and tangible realities; and while there *may be* error in the statements of a multitude of ancient fathers on this, as on other subjects, there *can be* no mistake as to the facts which are presented at this day by the Gospels to our own eyes. If, then, as I humbly think



has been fully proved, these facts cannot be explained on the supposition either that our Lord spoke for the most part in Hebrew, or that our present Greek Gospel of St Matthew is a version of a Hebrew original, we must discard both such notions as errors, whoever may sanction or maintain them, and cling to that one simple and satisfactory hypothesis, by which, as has been shewn, the whole facts of the case are easily explained, and by which alone they become intelligible—that “OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST SPOKE IN GREEK, AND THE EVANGELISTS INDEPENDENTLY NARRATED HIS ACTIONS, AND REPORTED HIS DISCOURSES, IN THE SAME LANGUAGE WHICH HE HAD HIMSELF EMPLOYED.”

## CHAPTER VII.

### CONCLUSION—APPLICATIONS AND RESULTS.

IN this chapter I propose briefly to review the conclusions which have been reached in the preceding pages, and consider them in some of their practical applications and results. I do so, of course, without the remotest design or desire to influence the reader in judging of the validity of those positions which I have sought to establish. These must be accepted or rejected according to the evidence and arguments already adduced in their behalf. And if I did not believe them possessed of the authority of truth, no apparent advantages resulting from their acceptance could persuade me to adopt them. But as I am persuaded, rightly or wrongly, that they *have* been established on grounds of argument which cannot be invalidated, I trust I may be permitted, without being suspected of any wish to tamper with the critical judgment of the reader, to indicate some of those important practical issues which appear to me connected with them. This procedure will not, I hope, be deemed other than a natural and fitting conclusion to the investigations in which we have been engaged.

The first point which I claim to have established is

that our Lord and His apostles *habitually made use of the Greek language*. This is the fundamental position of my whole work, on the proof of which everything else may be said to depend. The First Part of the volume is entirely devoted to its illustration and establishment. And the conclusion which I have sought to make good amounts to this, that throughout the whole of His public ministry, in Jerusalem as well as Galilee, on the public highway when addressing the individuals around Him, whether these were poor and ignorant lepers, (Matt. viii. 3, &c.,) or rich and educated rulers, (Luke xviii. 19, &c.,) no less than when proclaiming, as from the Mount of Beatitudes, (Matt. v., &c.,) the word of salvation to assembled thousands : in the house of Martha at Bethany, (Luke x. 38, &c.,) when discoursing probably to a simple rural audience, as well as in the city, when He spoke so effectively (John vii. 46, &c.) to the crowds that gathered round Him :—our blessed Lord continually made use of the Greek language.

Now, if this conclusion has been established, it appears to me, as I believe it will appear to most readers, a point of the very highest interest and importance. Some writers, indeed, entitled to much respect, have spoken of the question as to the language usually employed by our Saviour, as if it were not only destitute of practical importance, but of general interest, and could attract attention only as a matter of fruitless historical curiosity or dry antiquarian research. But few, I am convinced, will be disposed to view the question in this light. To me, at least, it seems in itself, and independent of all practical purposes, a most interesting subject of investigation. To ascertain the

language which the Son of God spoke when He dwelt upon the earth—to find out, it may be, that in our existing Gospels we have the very words which He employed, and can reproduce to ourselves the tones in which He uttered them—this appears to me a matter interesting to far more than the antiquary, and to appeal to the heart of every earnest loving Christian. Who would not feel a new interest in the beautiful words, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” or the sublime words, “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live,” if he ascertained beyond a doubt that these words, as they stand in our Greek Testaments, were the very words which proceeded out of the Saviour’s mouth? It may be ridiculed by some as a sentimental weakness; but, for my own part, I am not ashamed to confess that when I read the Gospels, and reflect that in these the *ipsissima verba* of the Divine man have been recorded, the book is invested with a new interest; and I am able more vividly to feel as if introduced within the very circle of the Saviour’s hearers, who, it is said, “all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth.”

But, in truth, everything associated with our blessed Lord rises far above any merely sentimental or antiquarian interest. Whence, for instance, that attraction which the land of Palestine has possessed for Christians in every century of our era? Why is it that those crowds of pilgrims and travellers have flocked to it? And how comes it to pass that their tale, though a thousand times repeated, still finds eager and listening ears? Is it from the *antiquarian* curiosity which



prevails with respect to the ruins of that country? Is it any motive of that kind which leads the temporary sojourner in that land to peer so anxiously into Jacob's well, or to gaze so intently on the Mount of Olives? Nay; it is because the land is so closely associated in the minds of all Christians with Him they love. It is on that account that the tourist observes with so much earnestness, and the reader listens to his tale with so great avidity. It is because *He* once trode them that even the narrow repulsive streets of Jerusalem have an interest which none else on earth can equal; it is because *He* once dwelt there that the unpretending Nazareth has power to stir so deeply the hearts of its many visitors. And if even the soil on which *He* trode, and the localities with which *He* was connected—things utterly extraneous to Himself—can thus attract and affect the Christian, shall it be said that the question respecting the language which *He* used—the words which *He* uttered—the medium *He* employed for laying bare to us His heart, for making us acquainted with His truest self—is one of mere antiquarian interest? Surely such is a very low and unworthy view to take of it; and although no utilitarian purpose whatever be served by the inquiry, it is still one which may well stimulate to diligence in its prosecution, and which will be felt amply to reward pains and industry in its settlement.

It has accordingly been generally felt, that to become even approximately acquainted with the *ipsissima verba* which lingered on the lips of our Divine Redeemer, is to reach a source of great and hallowed satisfaction. This has given a charm to the study of the Syriac and Chaldee languages which it would not

otherwise have possessed. The belief has prevailed that in a dialect kindred to, and almost identical with, these languages, our Saviour's intercourse with others was conducted. A peculiar fascination has thus been imparted to the form of speech which it is believed the Son of God ennobled by His employment of it upon earth. "The Palestinian Syriac" it has been said "is a language pre-eminently interesting to the Christian. It was sanctified by the lips of the Divine Redeemer. In those forms of speech He conversed with the virgin mother, instructed His disciples, and proclaimed to myriads the promises of eternal life."\* To the same effect, Widmanstadt, the first who published the Syriac New Testament in Europe, describes, in his preface, the Syriac as "*hanc linguam Redemptoris nostri ortu, educatione, doctrina, miraculis, corporis et sanguinis sui confectione Eucharasticâ, ac patris etiam æterni voce bis cœlo ad eum emissâ, consecratam.*" And, to quote only one other example, the learned Walton says of the Aramæan language, as supposed to have been continually employed by Christ—"Hanc sacro ore consecravit, in hac doctrinam Evangelicam tradidit, in hac preces ad Patrem obtulit, mysteria mundo abscondita aperuit, Patrisque de cœlo vocem audivit, ita ut dicere possimus—

‘Lingua hominum est lingua nobilitata Dei;’

et ut quidam cecinit de Syro Lexicographo,

‘Nos docet hic unus Numinis ore loqui.’†

Now, if I have succeeded in the leading argument of this work, all the interest which has thus been

\* *Etheridge's* "Hore Aramaicæ," p. 9.

† "Prolegomena," xiii., p. 631.

ascribed to the Syriac, really belongs to the Greek language. That finest of tongues had the peculiar honour of being selected and employed by the Son of God. The Creator availed Himself of the best vehicle which the genius of man has ever devised for the conveyance of thought, when He himself in human form held communication with His creatures upon earth. And having graciously come to this world, in order that He might display a love and reveal a religion destined to bless *all* nations, He employed not any restricted or provincial tongue, like the Hebrew, as the medium of disclosing the wonders of His grace, but, adopting the world's language, as if to suggest that for the world at large He both lived and died, it was the tongue of Greece to which, from His infancy, He was accustomed, and which He almost invariably used in the course of His public ministry.

If this be admitted to have been the case, few, I imagine, will fail to perceive the exceeding interest of such a conclusion. In addition to all the literary glories which have gathered round the language of Greece, its crowning glory cannot but be felt to lie in its having been employed by the Son of God while He dwelt upon the earth. And, instead of having to study a comparatively poor and unattractive language like the Syriac, in order to have the satisfaction of becoming acquainted with something like the expressions employed by our Redeemer, we have only to open our Greek New Testament to find still preserved to us, in living reality, the very words which issued from His lips.\*

\* In the many cases in which the Synoptics agree in their accounts, we may be sure that we have the exact words which were employed.

But let us now glance at the practical importance of that conclusion, which I have sought to establish as to the language generally employed by Christ. There are several respects in which this may be shewn, before adverting to the two most important of all, already indicated in connexion with the questions concerning the original language of St Matthew's Gospel, and the origin of the Gospels. We may, for instance, sometimes derive no small advantage in reading the Gospels from noting the delicate shades of meaning which are suggested in the discourses which they contain, by the employment of different *Greek* words or tenses. Strangely enough, and somewhat inconsistently, as was before hinted,\* this has been observed and dwelt upon by several writers, who, after

When Matthew and Mark agree, but Luke differs, the two former are of course to be regarded as containing the precise expressions made use of by our Lord or others. When there is a slight difference in all the three evangelists, I should be inclined, for the most part, to consider St Mark's account as nearest to the language which was actually used. I must notice, however, that there is a peculiarity observable in the second Gospel which should not be overlooked in judging of the *order* in which words were actually spoken, as well as events occurred. It seems a characteristic tendency of St Mark always to hurry on to the *result*, and then to gather up and relate the intermediate occurrences. A striking example of this is found in the apparently puzzling passage Mark xi. 13. The evangelist is eager to tell that the Saviour found no fruit on the fig-tree which had attracted His notice, and then appends, somewhat out of its place, the statement that but for the exceptional appearance which that particular fig-tree presented, no expectation would have been formed of finding fruit upon it, "for the regular season of figs was not yet come." So, again, at chap. xvi. 3, 4; and comp. i. 43, 44, vi. 7, 8, &c.

The Gospel of John, it is evident, stands on a different footing from the other three. It, too, preserves the substance of our Lord's discourses in the very words which He employed; but the inspired writer's individuality has influenced the form in which they are presented much more than in the case of the Synoptics. Comp., for some good remarks on this point, *Dr Costa's* "Four Witnesses," p. 291, &c.

\* Comp. above, Part I., Chap. II., p. 43.



all, believe that our Lord and His disciples habitually made use of Aramaic. Thus, Dean Trench remarks on Martha's words addressed to our Lord, (John xi. 22,) "But I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt *ask* of God, God will give it thee,"—"She uses the word *αἰτεῖν*, (*ῥοα ἀν αἰτήσῃ*.) a word never used by our Lord to express His own asking of the Father, but always, *ἐρωτᾷν*—for there is a certain familiarity, nay, authority, in His askings, which this word expresses, but that would not."\* Now, there is, I believe, great propriety and force in this observation, provided it be admitted that both our Lord and Martha spoke in Greek, and actually used these very expressions; but if it be supposed, as is generally done, that Aramaic was the language which He and His disciples employed, it is difficult to see on what the learned writer's remarks can rest. It will scarcely be maintained by any, that precisely equivalent expressions to *αἰτέω* and *ἐρωτάω* were used in the Aramaic tongue, and that the Holy Spirit led to the choice of these Greek words in order exactly to represent the original expressions. It is hardly possible that the fine distinction noted by the Dean as existing between the two Greek verbs should be found in precisely the same degree in any other language. The distinction is utterly lost in English, although we have many words nearly synonymous with "ask;" and in like manner, although there certainly were several terms in use in the Aramæan to express the idea of *asking*, it cannot be affirmed that any two of them were capable of representing the exact shades of meaning which have been pointed out

\* Trench "On the Miracles," p. 401.



by all Greek writers. If, then, these words were really employed by our Lord, it is perfectly fair, or rather imperative, on the principles of a just exegesis, that the distinction between them should be clearly brought out in interpreting the passage. But on the usual supposition, that the Saviour spoke in Aramaic, there is not the slightest ground for pressing the difference between them. The distinction entirely vanishes in Syriac. That language affords no means of marking the contrast between the two Greek words, so that even the accurate Peschito uses the *same term* in both clauses.\* Only, therefore, on the ground which I maintain, as to the language both now and generally employed by our Lord, can the argument so often and so forcibly made use of by Protestant writers, in dealing with this passage, be shewn to rest on any solid foundation.

It is also very usual, among recent exact interpreters, to attach considerable importance to the employment of the *aorist* by the evangelists. As might be expected, in the case of so accurate and painstaking a scholar, this is often done with admirable effect in the writings of Dean Ellicott. In one passage, for example, he remarks,—“The message (of the sisters at Bethany) only announced that Lazarus was sick; but

\* ܠܐ is the word employed twice, both in the Peschito and Curetonian Syriac. *Dr Schaff* remarks, in reference to this passage, and against the distinction usually pressed by Protestant writers as existing between the two Greek expressions:—“The Greek word must in both places correspond to the Aramaic Cephaz, which always means rock, and is used both as a proper and common noun.”—*Apostolic History*, ii., p. 5. It is hardly correct to say that the Syriac term in question always means *rock*; we find it used in one verse (Matt. xxvii. 60) to denote both a *rock* and a *stone*, the distinction between the two, there clearly indicated in the Greek, being utterly lost.

the supposition is not improbable, that by the time the messenger reached our Lord, Lazarus had died. It may be observed that, two days afterwards, when our Lord spoke of the death of Lazarus, He uses the aorist ἀπέθαιεν, (John xi. 14,) which seems to refer the death to some period, undefined indeed, but now past.\* Did, then, our Lord *really* make use of this very word and tense? If so, there is a basis for the consideration built upon it, and for the similar remarks which may frequently be found made on other passages in which the aorist is used. But if the Saviour spoke in Aramaic, there seems no ground for resting anything on a mere peculiarity of the Greek language, into which His words are supposed to have been translated.

A very important application of the conclusion we have reached as to the prevalent language of Palestine in the times of Christ and His apostles, may, I think, be made in reference to the difficult question concerning the *authorship of the Apocalypse*. There is no book of Scripture to which earlier or ampler testimony is borne than this one. Traces of it are to be found even in the first century. And the fullest evidence of its antiquity is contained in the writings of Papias, Justin Martyr, and Irenæus.† But while the early

\* "Historical Lectures on the Life of Christ," p. 267; comp. also p. 327. The same writer observes, in his *Essay on the Interpretation of Scripture*,—"The great exegetical difficulty in John xx. 17 appears modified, if not removed, by taking into consideration the tense of the verb ἀπτοῦ (not ἀψη.)"—*Aids to Faith*, p. 429. Surely, then, our Lord must be supposed to have spoken in Greek.

† See the passages in *Kirchhofer*, "Quellensammlung," pp. 296-328. He remarks on the accumulated testimonies:—"Aus diesen Zeugnissen ergibt sich, dass man schon im ersten Jahrhundert Spuren der Apocalypse findet, dass sie gegen das Ende des zweiten Jahrhunderts schon



origin of the book is universally acknowledged, much doubt has been thrown upon the belief that the apostle John was its author. In fact, the conclusion of modern scholarship has been very strongly against this opinion. It has been maintained, on internal grounds, that no point in New Testament criticism is more certain than that the apostle John, if he wrote the fourth Gospel and the epistles bearing his name, could not have been the writer of the Apocalypse; or, alternatively, that if he be regarded as the author of the latter work, he could not possibly have written the former.\* Accordingly, the majority of eminent foreign critics, such as Credner, De Wette, Lücke and others, have attributed it to John the Presbyter. In our own country, Dean Alford, while adhering to the opinion in favour of its apostolic authorship, gives strong and repeated expression to the difficulties which appear to beset such a supposition.† These difficulties arise entirely from the marked difference of style which exists between the Apocalypse and the other writings of John. No candid and competent scholar can deny that this difference is very great. The ruggedness of the Apocalypse contrasts very strongly with the smoothness of the Gospel; and the

in Asien, Europa und Africa verbreitet war, dass die meisten und wichtigsten Schriftsteller ihr günstig waren, dass vor dem dritten Jahrhundert keine Zeugen gegen sie auftraten, von da an aber in den verschiedenen Kirchen einzelne Bestreiter sich zeigten."—*P.* 297. Comp. *Credner*, "Gesch. des Neut. Kanon," § 33.

\* "Man geradezu behauptete, in der neutestamentlichen Kritik stehe nichts so fest, als dass der Apostel Johannes, wenn er der Verfasser des Evangeliums und der Briefe ist, die Apocalypse nicht geschrieben haben, oder wenn diese sein Werk ist, nicht Verfasser der andern Schriften sein könne."—*Kirchhofer*, p. 297.

+ *Alford's* "Greek Testament," vol. iv., part ii., proleg., pp. 224, 229, &c.

solecisms in grammar, which not unfrequently occur in the one, find nothing at all corresponding to them in the other.

At the same time there are manifestly several links in the Apocalypse and the other Johannine writings which seem to bind them all together. The same deeply Hebraic style of thought is visible in every one of them. Their author was evidently one who was thoroughly familiar with the old economy, and intimately acquainted with its varied adumbrations of Gospel blessings. This appears as strikingly in the writer of the Apocalypse as in the Gospel; and when we add to this consideration the further facts, that peculiar expressions, such as *ὁ λόγος* applied to Christ, John i. 1, 1 John i. 1, Apoc. xix. 13, occur in these three writings, and nowhere else throughout the New Testament, and that ancient testimony on the whole points decidedly to the apostle John as the author of the Apocalypse, we cannot but feel that there is much to lead us to acquiesce in that conclusion.

What opinion, then, are we to form in face of these perplexing facts? Must we, like many learned critics, account the diversity of style so great that it is impossible to believe the Apocalypse and Gospel to have proceeded from the same pen? Or, while, like Dean Alford, accepting the Apocalypse as the work of the apostle, must we declare ourselves, with him, "far from satisfied with any account at present given of the peculiar style and phenomena"\* which that writing presents?

It humbly appears to me that there is no necessity for coming to either of these conclusions. Admitting

\* *Alford*, ut sup., p. 229.

the *early* date of the Apocalypse and the *late* composition of the Gospel, the difference of style between the two seems hardly to present any difficulty. It is rather just what was to be expected. If the Apocalypse was written about A.D. 68 or 69, to which period it is now generally ascribed, and the Gospel was composed towards the end of the first century, a point almost unanimously agreed upon by biblical scholars, some twenty years or more elapsed between the composition of the two documents. And now, if we remember that, according to the conclusion reached in the First Part of this work, Greek of a certain kind was vernacular to John as to the inhabitants of Palestine generally, but that he possessed in his youth no great educational advantages, (Acts iv. 13,) all the phenomena presented by his works seem exactly such as would naturally belong to them. We find in the Apocalypse that rugged type of Greek which was generally prevalent among the lower orders in Palestine; while the style of the Gospel and epistles, written after the apostle had been long resident at Ephesus, is naturally marked by far greater correctness, and even by a kind of Ionic smoothness.

Thus, resting on the conclusion made good in the preceding pages—that the apostle possessed, as a matter of course, from his birth and residence in Galilee, an acquaintance with the popular Greek of the country—every fact connected with his writings seems exactly such as there was reason to anticipate. The very early and frequent notices of the Apocalypse which occur in the fathers, and the comparatively late and meagre allusions which are made to the Gospel, find an easy explanation in the supposition of the one work

having been published long before the other ; and this conclusion at once explains, while it is confirmed by, the diversity of style observable in the two compositions. So far from any real difficulty arising from the difference in question, the fact of such difference existing seems rather, when viewed in connexion with the circumstances of the apostle's history, one of the many natural traits which appear in Scripture, and which tend so powerfully to support its authenticity and genuineness. Had the Apocalypse and Gospel of John presented no marked diversity of style, then, apart altogether from the psychological reasons which, of themselves, must have had *some* influence in giving rise to such difference, a real difficulty would have sprung up in the mere period of time which elapsed between the composition of the two works. The rough Greek of the Palestinian fisherman could not have continued to flow from the pen of the aged apostle after a lengthened residence in such a city as Ephesus. But, as the case really stands, in the light of that conclusion reached in the previous pages as to the linguistic condition of Palestine in the days of our Lord, the diversities, no less than the similarities existing between the two writings, appear strongly to support the Johannine origin of both works.

The following observations of a learned writer, not himself holding the views which I have endeavoured to establish, will illustrate their importance generally, in reference to the interpretation of the Gospels. "It was," says Dr Black,\* "in the so-called Hebrew, or popular language of the nation, that Paul addressed the multitude assembled in the streets of Jerusalem

\* "On the Study of Exegetical Theology," p. 58, Edin., 1856.



beside the castle, though they were evidently prepared to listen to him with intelligence when they expected him to address them in Greek. But it was in Greek that his discourses were generally spoken; and the Greek student of the New Testament, by placing himself in the position of those to whom these discourses were addressed, and realising to himself what may still be ascertained of the very tones of the voice with which the words were uttered, will be in possession of an important exegetical principle for obtaining more vivid conceptions of the depth of meaning conveyed by the voice of the speaker." He refers, in illustration of this remark, to John vii. 28, where our Lord repeats the words of the people, and which, he says, "should be marked as interrogative, or quasi-interrogative." But, unfortunately, Dr Black also adopts (though apparently with some reluctance) the common notion that our Lord usually spoke in Aramaic, and thus deprives himself, to a great extent, of "the important exegetical principle" which he acknowledges. "The addresses of our Lord," he says, "seem, from the examples given of some of the words that He spoke, to have been delivered in the common Aramaean of the age and country; but the Greek form in which they have been transmitted in the Gospels, by the evangelists who recorded them under the guidance of inspiration, still puts it in the power of the student substantially to listen to the voice of Him who spake as never man spake." I find it somewhat difficult to form an idea of what is here meant by listening *substantially* to the voice of Christ in the Gospels, if we do not so in *reality*. In *every* faithful translation we have the substance of our Lord's words preserved.

The only difference (and in some points of view, doubtless, vitally important difference) between the Greek version of them and all others is, that in the one case the translation was made by inspired men, while, in other cases, the translators simply employed their natural powers. But this does not touch the point at present under consideration. Inspiration cannot effect impossibilities. It cannot make a *translation* of our Lord's words to be the *very words* which He spoke. And, so far as "listening substantially" to His voice is concerned, I confess myself unable to see how the reader of His sayings in Greek, occupies any position of advantage over the reader of the same in English, unless, as I am firmly convinced, and have endeavoured to shew, we do in very deed listen, in the Greek of the evangelists, to the identical words which proceeded out of our Saviour's mouth.

How great the satisfaction of being able to believe that this is the case! How vivid and impressive the emotions awakened by the thought, that in the striking words preserved by St Mark, *Σιώπα, πεφίμωσω*, we have the very command by which our Lord stilled the raging deep,—that in the *Πάτερ ἡμῶν* of St Matthew and St Luke we possess the very terms in which Christ taught His disciples to address their Father in heaven,—and that, in the marvellous prayer recorded in John xvii., we hear the very tones of His Divine yet supplicating voice—we listen to the majestic words in which Deity on earth called upon Deity in heaven! I cannot but believe that, if this conclusion be regarded as established, a new attraction will be found in the study of the Gospels—that many more will be stimulated to seek an acquaintance with these

precious records in the original Greek, and that all who are able to read them in the language which enshrines the words of the Divine Redeemer will feel more vividly than before the meaning of His own striking declaration—"The words which I have spoken unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."\*

The second question discussed, and, in my humble judgment settled, in the previous pages, is that which respects the original language of St Matthew's Gospel. This is a question which meets the critical student of Scripture at the very threshold of the New Testament ; and he will soon perceive reason to conclude that it is not only first in the order in which it occurs, but first also in many respects in the importance which belongs to it. It involves in its settlement some very momentous consequences ; and, on this account, while *truth alone* is to be sought in our investigations, it demands to be considered with a solemn feeling of responsibility and reverence.

As has been shewn in a previous chapter, our only choice in this controversy lies between the first and second hypotheses. The reconciling theory, as it has been called, which assumes, without a particle of evidence, the publication of *two* Gospels by St Matthew, was proved to be as unsatisfactory as it is arbitrary and baseless. No alternative remains but that we believe either, *first*, that the apostle wrote originally in Hebrew, and that we now possess only a version of his work, executed by some unknown translator ; or, *secondly*, that he wrote in Greek only, and that we

\* Τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἐγὼ λελάληκα ὑμῖν, πνεῦμά ἐστιν καὶ ζωὴ ἐστιν.—  
John vi. 63.

still have his work as authentic and entire as are any of the other Gospels.

Many attempts have been made by the more reverent and cautious advocates of the first hypothesis, to shew that, although, on their supposition, our present Greek Gospel is the work of an unknown and irresponsible translator, we may yet accord to it the reverence which is due to inspired scripture. Dr Tregelles, in particular, has laboured to maintain this position. He says in one place, (and often repeats the idea,)—"Why should the fact of a book being *translated* by an *unknown* hand detract from its authority? Were not many canonical books *written* by unknown persons? Who shall say positively who *wrote* many of the Old Testament books? Who wrote Joshua, Judges, II. Samuel, Kings, Esther, and other books? And yet God has preserved to us these inspired anonymous volumes." \*

But the irrelevancy of these remarks to the point in question appears to me evident. There *are*, no doubt, in the Old Testament scriptures some books the authorship of which we, at the present day, cannot positively determine, which, nevertheless, stand on precisely the same footing as the rest of the inspired volume. But Dr Tregelles seems to forget to what these owe their authority. Not to mention other reasons, there is especially this one—that they were all contained in those *scriptures* to which our Lord himself so often gave the weight of His Divine sanction and approval. Had we anything like this for the supposed translation of St Matthew, not another word need be said about its anonymous character. If the

\* "On the Original Language of St Matthew's Gospel," p. 19.



Greek Gospel, when viewed as a version from the Hebrew, could be proved to be of apostolic origin, or to have received apostolic sanction, then its Divine authority could not be questioned. But it is needless to remark that nothing approaching to such sanction can be pleaded on its behalf. It rises in obscurity—no one knows when or where—it presents no credentials of its accuracy or fidelity, and it offers not a vestige of proof that it has any claim to be regarded as a portion of the inspired Word of God. It is vain to tell us that the fathers treated it as inspired scripture, while asserting it to be a translation, and professing themselves ignorant of its author. Unless they give us *good and sufficient reasons* for adopting such a course, it does not follow that what satisfied them must also satisfy us. But, for my own part, I do not believe that our present Greek Gospel thus lightly attained to its place in the canon. Nothing, I am persuaded, except its apostolic origin, will account for the universal deference with which, from the earliest ages, it has been regarded. It was accepted by the primitive Church as St Matthew's Gospel, because it *really was so*, and as such inspired; and when, afterwards, the notion spread that the Greek was merely a translation, this error could not deprive the Gospel of that position of authority which it had already attained; and the fathers, accordingly, continued to quote and refer to it as the infallible word of God.\*

\* The following remarks of Olshausen in support of the third hypothesis do, in reality, serve to confirm our position that St Matthew wrote in *Greek only*. "It is a singular circumstance," he says, "that while all the fathers of the Church declare Matthew to have written in Hebrew, they all, notwithstanding, make use of the Greek text as of

But let us look a little more closely at the ground occupied by those modern critics who hold that our existing Greek Gospel is merely a version from the Hebrew, formed by an unknown translator, and yet claim for it the respect due to the word of inspiration. Dr Tregelles very properly quotes Jerome's famous saying, "Quis in Græcum transtulerit non satis certum est," to shew how groundless are the assertions of those who maintain that either St Matthew himself, or some other of the apostles, was the translator; but he does not feel how ominous is the sound of these words as respects the authority which he claims for our existing Gospel. Is a translation, no one knows by whom, (and, so far as appears, no one has *ever* known,) to be set side by side with inspired scripture? Who, that has any proper notion of what inspiration implies, can bear such an idea for a single moment? If inspiration is a reality at all, it distinguishes the books which possess it from all others in the world. We are not, indeed, able to shew this by an exhibition of the manner in which the Spirit of God

genuine apostolic origin, without remarking what relation the Hebrew Matthew bore to our Greek Gospel; for *that the oldest fathers of the Church did not possess Matthew's Gospel in any other form than that in which we now have it is fully settled*. . . . The idea that some unknown individual translated the Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew, and that this translation is our canonical Gospel, is at once contradicted by the circumstance of the universal diffusion of this same Greek Gospel of Matthew, which makes it absolutely necessary to suppose that the translation was executed by some one of acknowledged influence in the Church, indeed of apostolic authority."—*Olshausen*, i., 28, (Clark's Foreign Theol. Library, vol. v.) It is here justly argued that nothing except the apostolic origin of our Greek Gospel will account for the early and universal acceptance given it; but as we have not the slightest evidence that it was *translated* by Matthew or any other of the apostles, we are bound to hold its true and exclusive originality in the form in which we still possess it

operates upon the minds of the inspired. But the works thus produced must, unless the idea of inspiration be a mere deception, be totally different in point of authority from all others, inasmuch as they, and none else, possess the attribute of infallibility, and claim to be received, without exception or qualification, as the unerring dictates of the living God.

Inspiration, then, is a very solemn peculiarity to attribute to any writing, and must not, except on the very best grounds, be either supposed or admitted. It completely isolates those books to which it belongs from all others, however excellent or admirable these may be reckoned. And it is highly important at the present day carefully to preserve the vital distinction which thus exists between inspired and non-inspired books, since it is not uncommon to find in our popular literature a sort of inspiration spoken of as pertaining to mere human compositions. This error must be all the more guarded against, because, like every other that has obtained much currency, it involves a kind of half-truth. There *is* a sense, we readily admit, in which it may be said that the Spirit of God is the Author of *all* intellectual eminence; so that whatever is excellent or noble in any created being, is to be traced to His gracious and effectual working. To Him is due every triumph of human genius, and to Him should the glory of all that intellectual power which man displays be ascribed. When the astronomer calculates, years beforehand, the courses and positions of the stars of heaven—when the metaphysician draws his fine distinctions, and grapples successfully with that very mind which serves him—when the poet's eye, rolling in ecstacy, contemplates the gorgeous

visions which flit before his imagination, and when he seizes and incarnates these in words for the delight and admiration of mankind—when the historian gives life and interest and value to the deeds of bygone ages, by the graphic style and the philosophic spirit in which he narrates them—when, in short, any proof whatever is presented of the exercise of mental superiority, there do we gladly acknowledge the working of the Spirit of God—of Him who at first made man “a living soul,” who filled the heart of the skilful Bezaleel with wisdom and understanding and knowledge, and who is still promised as a Spirit of counsel and of might to all them that ask Him.

But, while we readily admit these truths, we must guard against the erroneous inference which some have drawn from them—that the inspiration claimed by and for the writers of Scripture, is the same in kind with that which is enjoyed by the possessors of natural genius. Not a few will acknowledge at once the inspiration of David, Isaiah, and Paul; but it is just in the same sense as they maintain that of Homer, or Plato, or Milton. Now, this is a pernicious confounding of things which are, in reality, entirely different. There is, as every sincere believer in Scripture must feel, an essential difference indicated in the Bible itself, between the nature of that influence which is exerted upon the mind of the secular poet or historian, and that which goes forth upon the sacred prophet or evangelist—a difference so vast, that it is an utter abuse of language to call the two things by the same name. It may be, for aught we can tell, that the process by which the Spirit operates upon the mind is as simple in the one case as the other. The *modus operandi* is equally



unknown to us with respect to the sacred as to the secular writer. But while we can say nothing about the differences which may exist as to the *manner* in which the Divine power is applied, we know to a certainty that there is an infinite difference in the *results* which are produced. *This* grand peculiarity belongs to every inspired book, (πάσα γραφή θεόπνευστος, every God-breathing writing,) that it is *absolutely and unerringly true*, and may thus be taken by man as a sure and infallible guide. If this attribute be denied to the books of Scripture, we are only playing with words while we continue to talk of their inspiration ; and if this attribute be admitted, they are elevated to a height where they exist alone ; they differ essentially and entirely from every other book, however excellent or able, which has ever been presented to the world.

I have been led to make these remarks in connexion with the position occupied by Dr Tregelles as regards the existing Gospel of St Matthew. He maintains that our Greek Gospel is a version, by some unknown person, of the original work of the apostle, and yet claims for it the same respect and submission that we yield to the rest of Scripture. And there cannot be the slightest doubt that this admirable critic is perfectly satisfied of the logical consistency of his position. But I may be allowed to say for myself, that I could never consent to ascribe the solemn, the peculiar, the almost *awful* attribute of inspiration to any work on such grounds. Our very reverence for inspired scripture requires that we should be cautious, yea, most scrupulous, in acknowledging the claims of any work to be so regarded. We may well be thankful that the Bible comes to us so manifestly bearing the

impress of its heavenly origin, and at the same time so abundantly supported by external evidence. But if driven to believe, as Dr Tregelles does, that one of its books is simply a translation of an originally inspired work,—a translation made, no one knows by whom, and possessing, so far as we can learn, no apostolic authority—a translation, moreover, which bears in itself unmistakable evidence that the translator *tampered* with the copy before him, our confidence, I feel, is at once shaken, not only in that particular book, but also, to some extent, in the whole professedly inspired volume of which it forms a part.

Dr Tregelles says as little as possible with respect to the relation subsisting between what he deems our present Greek translation of St Matthew, and the apostle's original work. But every candid inquirer must perceive that, on his supposition, the translator has taken no small liberties with the original. We have seen that this is the case with regard to the manner in which citations are made from the Old Testament ; and it also appears in other particulars, as most of the defenders of the Hebrew original have confessed. Dr Davidson plainly declares, that “any conclusion to which a modern writer comes in regard to changes or additions made by the translator depends largely on subjective feeling. It rests on *the doctrinal position he has previously taken*.”\* It is plain that room is thus left for discarding as much of the Gospel as any one pleases, while, at the same time, he could not, on the hypothesis of the Hebrew original, be charged with the impiety of setting aside

\* “Introduction,” i., p. 47.

the Word of God, since he might plead that the passages he rejected had been added by the translator, and as such deserved no reverence. Dr Davidson admits (as, indeed, every one holding the Hebrew original must admit in order to escape absurdity) that the numerous explanations of words and customs which occur in our Greek Gospel, were inserted by the translator. And if these, why not more? How can we be sure that *any* of the passages peculiar to St Matthew really had a place in the original work, and were not inserted by the translator? How can we know with certainty that the closing words of the Gospel,—words, in several points of view, so important,—really ever issued from the Saviour's lips? And so with everything else in the first Gospel that is unconfirmed by any of the others. In all such cases, we are completely at the mercy of the translator,—a translator of whose faithfulness we have no guarantee, but of whose temerity in changing and adding to his original we have indubitable evidence,—a translator of whom no one, ancient or modern, ever heard; whose name was never whispered even in the very age when his work is supposed to have been issued, and of whose qualifications, no less than of his very existence, a profound silence is maintained by all antiquity.

It humbly appears to me, then, that Dr Tregelles's position, as the advocate at once of the Hebrew original, and of the plenary inspiration of our first Gospel, is utterly inconsistent and untenable. The *real* result to which the hypothesis of a Hebrew original leads, has been brought out in its plain colours by several other writers. Some of these certainly evince a far

less reverent spirit than Dr Tregelles, but they reason far more logically on the premises with which he furnishes them. Thus, it was long ago said by Michaelis,—"If we have really lost the original work of St Matthew, and possess nothing except a Greek translation, we certainly can ascribe to the words no such thing as inspiration; it is even possible that here and there the true meaning of the apostle has been mistaken by the translator."\* To the same effect Jones (a writer of a very different school from Michaelis) expresses himself as follows, with regard to the hypothesis that our existing Gospel is a version from the Hebrew:—"For all we know to the contrary, it may be a very false and corrupt translation; it may be done by a person no way qualified for such a work; and does not this now make its authority dubious and uncertain? For my part, I freely own, if I believed it to be a translation made by a person I knew nothing of, I could not yield it that same respect, and have that same value for it, as the other parts of the sacred writings."†

But not only must the inspiration of the existing Gospel of Matthew be abandoned, if the hypothesis of its Hebrew original be maintained, the whole New Testament canon is also unsettled, and our confidence in its authority to some extent lessened. For on what ground do we accept it as inspired scripture? So far as *external* evidence is concerned, simply because the early Church

\* "Haben wir von Matthäo den Grundtext verloren, und nichts als eine griechische Uebersetzung: so können wir freilich den Worten keine göttliche Eingebung zuschreiben: ja es ist möglich, dass an ein und anderm Orte, der wahre Sinn des Apostels von dem Uebersetzer verfehlet ist."—*Einl.*, ii., § 137.

† Jones "On the Canon," iii., 250.



did so, and because we believe that the greatest pains were taken by the primitive Christians to have certain evidence of the apostolic origin of every book before it was admitted into the canon. But what shall be said of their manner of acting with respect to the Greek Gospel of St Matthew, if that be regarded as a translation? Here we have a book referred to as inspired scripture, and elevated to the pre-eminent position which, as we have seen, is involved in such a distinction, while no trouble seems to have been taken to discover on what ground its authority rested; and no one appears to have known through whose hands it passed in exchanging its original apostolic form for that in which we now possess it. It is certain that the early Christians who adopted the notion of its being a version from the Hebrew were as much in the dark respecting the translator as we are. Jerome's well-known words on this point have already been quoted; and if, with all the uncertainty which he says attached to the vital question, Who translated the original work? the translation was nevertheless received as infallible scripture, it is plain that our confidence in the principles which guided the early Church in this essential inquiry is very much diminished. As has been previously said, I take a very different view of the manner in which our Greek Gospel attained to its place among the canonical scriptures; but on the supposition of its being a version, it seems impossible that our reliance on the grounds usually assigned for the authority of the New Testament generally should not be weakened. This conclusion has, in fact, been reached by some writers on the subject. These derive from the data with which Dr Tregelles furnishes them

several inferences from which he sensitively shrinks. Thus in a recent publication we find an attempt made (and successfully made, if the premises be granted) to damage the whole New Testament, from the assumption made with respect to the Gospel of St Matthew. "The theory of inspired dictation, or literary infallibility," says the late Dr Donaldson, "takes account of the canonical books only, but extends itself to all of them without reservation or exception. Consequently the tradition which constitutes the canon of Scripture is the sole criterion of infallible authority ; and if it is admitted that any document though canonical is yet of uncertain or precarious importance,"—(as he quite correctly argues is the case with St Matthew's Gospel, "if the general tradition respecting it be received,")—"it must follow, that a place in the canon does not bestow a character of infallibility, and that the theory of inspired dictation or guidance is not more applicable to a canonical work than to any other ancient writings." \*

If this be the logical consequence of maintaining the exclusive Hebrew original of our first Gospel, let the reader now consider, for a moment, the very different result which follows from the adoption of that hypothesis which it has been my endeavour to establish. I have tried to shew that the evangelist Matthew wrote his Gospel in Greek only, and that this inspired account of our Lord's actions and discourses we at the present day possess. If this has been effected, we may be allowed to congratulate ourselves on the result. The work of St Matthew is in

\* "Christian Orthodoxy Reconciled with the Conclusions of Modern Biblical Learning," p. 162.

our hands, entire and perfect, as it proceeded from his pen,—excepting only those slightly erroneous readings which have of necessity crept into this, as into the other Gospels, with the lapse of time. These it is the object of textual criticism to correct; and these all must be strongly stimulated to remove, who believe that in seeking after the genuine Greek expressions we are in quest of the very words of God. Let this be believed, and criticism acquires a dignity and grandeur which cannot otherwise belong to it. Let the biblical critic, while he pores over ancient MSS., remember that he is seeking the very words of inspiration, and he will be strengthened and encouraged in his anxious and painful toil. “*The word of the Lord*” is truly precious; and when, through diligence and perseverance, the sacred critic has made sure that he has found it, he may justly say with the psalmist—“I rejoice at THY WORD, as one that findeth great spoil.” But if, on the other hand, it is only *man’s words*, after all, that he is in quest of, his zeal may well abate, and his efforts be suspended. Are not one man’s words just as good as another’s? Why then not rest satisfied with the Gospels as they are, instead of wearing life and strength away in the fruitless labour of discarding one set of human words in order to adopt another,—in setting aside one Greek expression which a *transcriber* may have preferred, just to replace it by another Greek expression which a *translator* may have employed? It is evident that, as the view which I have maintained on the point in question is the only one which comports with the ascription of Divine authority to the existing Gospel of St Matthew, and the only one which justifies and con-

firms our confidence in the remainder of the canon, so it is also the only one which imparts a meaning or value to those critical studies which have for their object the discovery and restoration of the original text of our existing Gospels.

We see, then, that the question respecting the original language of St Matthew's Gospel is one of vast importance, with respect not only to that Gospel itself, but to the whole of the New Testament. It may, in truth, be called the very *Thermopylae* of sacred criticism. Our very entrance upon critical investigations involves us at once in this difficult controversy: on this ground the decisive battle must be fought; and when we take up the position occupied by the upholders of the exclusive Hebrew original, it is only too plain that, so far as logic is concerned, the result must prove disastrous to the friends of Divine revelation, and the cause of inspired truth is irretrievably lost.

A third result, which to some may appear the most important of all, has also been attained in the preceding pages—that, namely, which relates to the origin of the Gospels.\* It has hitherto been the *opprobrium*

\* The momentous nature of this question, as well as the absolute necessity of reaching some conclusion regarding it, will be sufficiently suggested by the following ominous remarks from a well-known volume:—"The origin of the three first Gospels is an inquiry which has not been much considered by English theologians since the days of Bishop Marsh. The difficulty of the question has been sometimes misunderstood,—the point being, how there can be so much agreement in words, and so much disagreement both in words and facts; the double phenomenon is the real perplexity,—how, in short, there can be all degrees of similarity and dissimilarity, the kind and degree of similarity being such as to make it necessary to suppose that large portions are copied from each other or from common documents; the dissimi-



*criticorum* that they have not been able to give any probable account of this matter. It seems now as if a sort of despair had taken the place of those violent efforts which were once put forth in this direction; although, as we have seen every now and then, new theories (or old ones made to look new) are presented to the world. Dr Lee expresses himself as if he believed there was no possible means of settling the question; and while giving a sketch of the various theories which have been proposed, makes known his opinion regarding them as follows:—"I am far from insinuating that the several hypotheses are on a par in point of ingenuity or of literary merit: but it can scarcely be asserted, that any among them possesses much superiority over its fellows on the score of probability."\*

Now, if I have succeeded in the previous argument, this vexed question may be regarded as settled. We are able, on the ground maintained in this work, to give an easy and natural account of all the phenomena presented by the Gospels. According to the hypothesis which I have proposed, both the coincidences and diver-

larity being of a kind which seems to render impossible any knowledge in the authors of one another's writings. The most probable solution of this difficulty is, that the tradition on which the *first three* Gospels are based was at first preserved orally, and slowly put together, and written in the three forms which it assumed at a very early period, those forms being in some places, perhaps, modified by translation. It is not necessary to develop this hypothesis further. The point to be noticed is, that whether this or some other theory be the true account, (and some such account is demonstrably necessary,) the assumption of such a theory, or rather the observation of the facts on which it rests, cannot but exercise an influence on interpretation. We can no longer speak of three independent witnesses of the Gospel narrative."—*Essays and Reviews*, pp. 370, 371; comp. *Edin. Review*, cii., p. 529.

\* *Lee* on Inspiration, p. 562; see, also, p. 324.

sities observable between the evangelists are altogether such as were to be expected. They *agree* because they were all well acquainted with the subjects of which they treated, and because they all wrote in the same language that our Lord had spoken. They *differ* because they were all independent writers, and naturally expressed themselves in their own individual manner and style, according to their several dispositions and acquirements.

This last proposition, as to the *independence* of the first three evangelists, may now be said to be generally admitted among our leading biblical scholars. The evidence for it which is presented in the Gospels themselves is such as to be felt irresistible by almost every earnest and candid mind. And thus the famous saying of Augustine, so often repeated by sacred critics, that Mark was a mere copyist and abbreviator of Matthew, ("pedissequus et breviator,") is finally renounced as a mistake. It is found inconsistent with the internal phenomena presented by the Gospels themselves, and, therefore, notwithstanding the great name of its author, and the long acceptance which it met with from the critical world, it is now, by general consent, abandoned.

And in this, I may remark, there is found an analogous course of procedure to that which has been followed in this work. In both cases, *internal* evidence is allowed to decide the question at issue. The words of Jerome (or others) respecting Matthew, like those of Augustine respecting Mark, are, after all, but the *verba magistri* (*machtsprüche*, as the Germans say) which have been allowed to lead opinion in the Church too long, but which ought, the one as well as the

other, to be brought to the enduring test of the internal evidence which the Gospels themselves present. This has been done by others with respect to the saying of Augustine, and the consequence has been that its influence has now ceased to be felt; this I have endeavoured to do in the preceding pages with respect to the statements of Papias and his followers, with what effect remains to be seen.

Another observation must be made with respect to some of the theories which have been noticed in the course of our investigation. It should be borne in mind that while, as was previously remarked, we are not at liberty to call in the inspiration of the sacred writers to aid us in solving a difficulty which arises from some opinion of our own, it ought at the same time to be sufficient evidence to all believers in the Divine authority of Scripture of the unsoundness of any hypothesis, if it appears plainly *inconsistent* with the doctrine of inspiration. But this has been greatly forgotten by those who have speculated on the subject of the origin of the Gospels. They have devised and promulgated theories which are manifestly repugnant to all notion of the inspiration of the sacred writers. And yet the books of Scripture have been received by these theorists as, for the most part, genuine and authoritative documents. But admitting, as the writers now referred to profess to do, that the Gospels are divinely-inspired narrations of our Lord's life and discourses, it is then utterly inconsistent to proceed to the formation of such a hypothesis respecting their origin, as plainly appears, or may easily be shewn, to be repugnant to that fundamental doctrine. And let the reader only consider for a moment the various

hypotheses which have been described, the original Gospel theory and the copying theory, with the several modifications of these that have been proposed, and then say if he can believe in the inspiration of the writers, while he rests in any one of these hypotheses. If he cannot do so, he is bound to reject the doctrine of inspiration altogether, or rather, and infinitely better, reject the false and delusive theory which is proved inconsistent with it. Reason demands that either the inspiration of the sacred writers, or the theories opposed to it, which have been invented by their critics, should be abandoned. Rejecting their inspiration, one is free to form any hypothesis with respect to the origin of their works which ingenuity can devise, and which common sense will tolerate.\*

\* But even *common sense* rebels against the complicated theories which have been devised on this subject. It expresses itself in the following remarks of Schleiermacher:—"For my part," he says, "I find it quite enough to prevent me from conceiving the origin of our first three Gospels according to Eichhorn's theory—that I am to figure to myself our good evangelists surrounded by five or six open rolls or books, and that, too, in different languages, looking by turns from one into another, and writing a compilation from them. I fancy myself in a German study of the eighteenth or nineteenth century rather than in the primitive age of Christianity, and if this resemblance diminishes, perhaps, my surprise at the well-known image having suggested itself to the critic in the construction of his hypothesis, it renders it the less possible for me to believe that such was the actual state of the case."—*The Gospel of St Luke*, p. 6. Schleiermacher's own theory will be found described in Horne's "Introd.," vol. iv., p. 653, and is quite as unsatisfactory as any that preceded it. Considering the complicated and contradictory hypotheses which have been framed on this subject by continental critics, one scarcely wonders to find another great German, *Goethe*, expressing himself in the following terms respecting the Gospels:—"Es ist ein Meer auszutrinken wenn man sich in eine historische und critische Untersuchung dieserhalb einlässt. Man thut immer besser, sich ohne Weiteres an das zu halten, was wirklich da ist, und sich davon anzueignen, was man für seine sittliche Cultur und Stärkung gebrauchen kann."—*Eckermann's Gespräche mit Goethe*, ii., 265.



But, admitting their inspiration, the account which is given of their works must be consistent with that fact. Either *rationalism* in its most imperious and haughty form, disdaining to take into consideration the idea of their heavenly origin in dealing with the phenomena which they present, must be allowed the fullest scope ; or *reverence*, which gratefully acknowledges them as divine, must restrict itself to such an account of their special features and characteristics as will be in harmony with that great fundamental principle.

And can any reader hesitate as to which of these alternatives should be chosen ? Shall we, from a blind reverence for some statements of antiquity, statements which can be proved absurd and contradictory, allow ourselves to be robbed of those blessed words of truth and consolation by which alone the present life is rendered happy and hopeful, and by which alone there is a gleam of brightest sunshine cast upon the dark hereafter ? Are any so wedded to ancient opinions, and to human theories, as that they will cling to these, though they should have to let the Bible go altogether, or at least to resign its claims as the sure and infallible word of God ? Why should agreement with antiquity be purchased at such a price ? What should prevent us from looking with our own eyes at the Gospels, and drawing our own inferences from the phenomena which they present ? This is what I have ventured to do in the preceding pages ; and although some conclusions have thus been reached opposed to the opinions of ancient writers, I should be sorry to be held as unduly discrediting their testimony or disparaging their judgment. On many grounds they

deserve our veneration ; for many reasons they have a strong claim upon our gratitude ; but when they make statements which appear inconsistent with truth, they certainly ought not to be followed ; and however long the false opinion may have reigned, it is to be unceremoniously rejected ; for, as one of the fathers themselves excellently observes, "Custom, without truth, is only the old age of error." \*

I have tried, then, to shew that there is a simple theory suggested by the Gospels themselves, with respect to their origin, which explains all fancied difficulties, and accounts for all actual facts. And if that theory be accepted, the hard question proposed by Professor Jowett melts completely and for ever away. "There was," he says,† "if we may use an expression which sounds almost like a contradiction in terms, a Hebrew Christianity yet earlier than the New Testament, the memorials of which are preserved to us in the translation only. How did this Hebrew or Syriac Christianity pass into a language so different as the Greek ?" As I have endeavoured to prove, no such gulf lies between us at the present day and the Christianity which was proclaimed by Christ himself. We still possess the very words which issued from His lips in our existing Greek Gospels, and may thus feel that the Divine Redeemer is yet speaking to us in the same tones in which He addressed His contemporaries, and in which He will continue to teach, comfort, and instruct all succeeding generations.

The hope of the world, I believe, lies in the Bible. As a large experience has proved, mankind cannot do

\* "Consuetudo, sine veritate, vetustas erroris est."—*Cyprian*.

† "Epistles of St Paul," vol. i., p. 452, 2d edit.

without that Book. Not the greatest advances in civilisation,—not the mightiest efforts of human genius will make up for the want of that heaven-inspired volume. God's words are like the stars of the firmament—abiding and unerring, so that they may safely be trusted to for direction. Man's words, again, when compared with these, are, even at the highest, but like brilliant meteors, which may for a moment dazzle the eye, but which can furnish no steady or trustworthy guidance to the anxious traveller to eternity.

In order to be convinced of the infinite preciousness of the Bible, we have only to remember what the world was without that book-revelation, which it is the fashion of some in our own day to despise, and what it still remains in those lands where that volume is as yet unknown. As if to test human ability to the utmost, it was long ere the ancient Scriptures found their way beyond the narrow province of Judæa; and it has been but slowly that the Book which contains the full revelation of God's character and will, has advanced throughout the earth. Men were left for ages to exert their powers in devising a substitute for a direct revelation from heaven—and what was the result? Let the state of the heathen world at the birth of Christ return an answer. There was then no fixed system of morals—but vice was mistaken for virtue, and good was confounded with evil; there were no true ideas of God—but the ignorant were worshippers of *many*, and the learned scarcely of *any*, deities; there were no just views of the nature and destiny of man—but while some dreamt of immortality, others openly denied it; superstition, vile and debasing—or atheism, void and

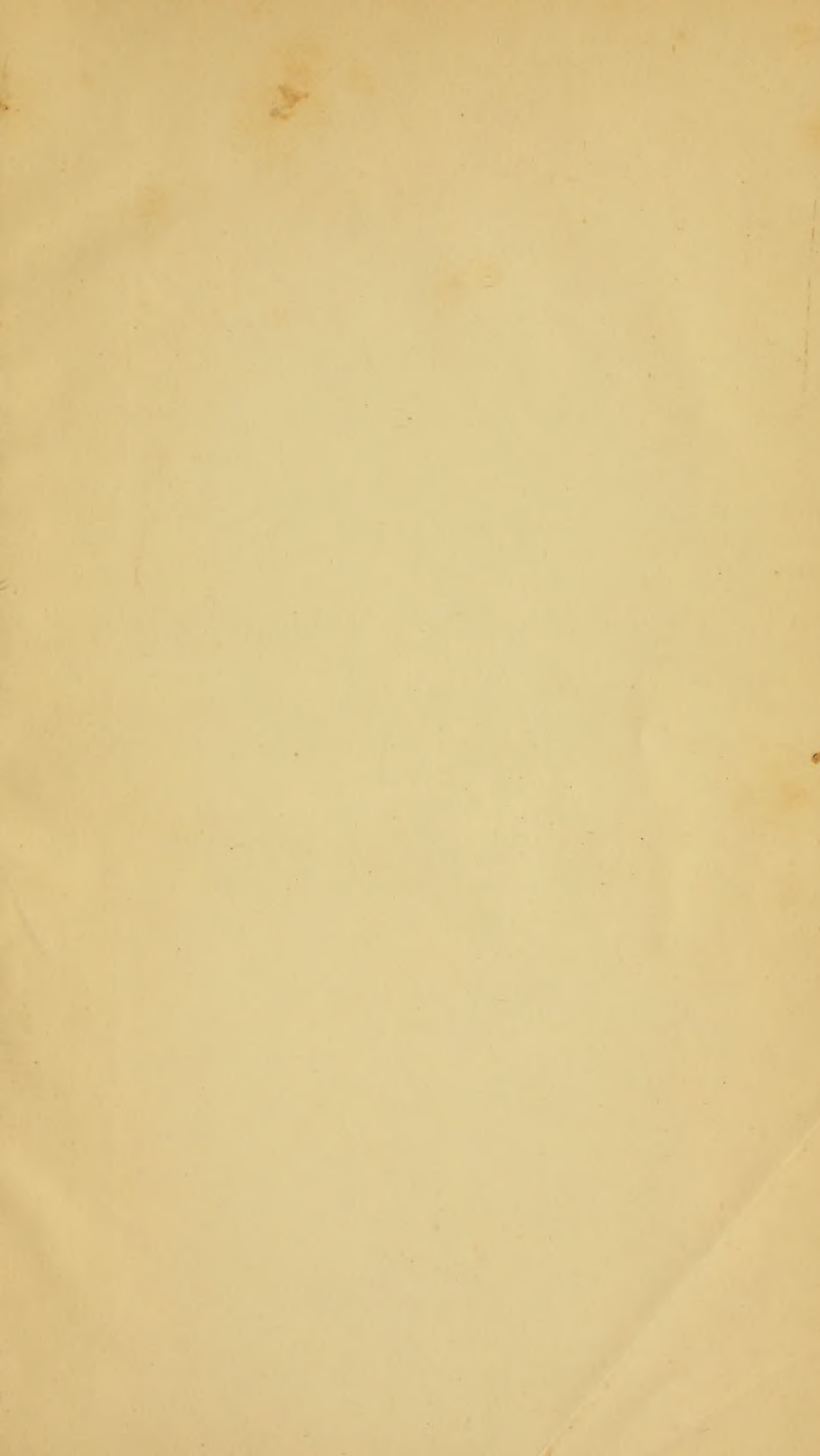
cheerless, were the only alternatives presented to man's choice ; and either of these led to the extinction of all that was noblest in his nature, and to a complete disregard of morality and virtue. In ancient Greece, refined yet superstitious—in ancient Rome, civilised yet sunk in wickedness—in ancient Britain, both rude and immoral, we see what our world was without the Bible : and in modern China, Hindostan, and Turkey—the countries now most favourably representative of the extra-Christian world—we see what, without that Book, they would have remained until this day. To the Bible the world is indebted for all that it knows of the true character both of God and man, and of the relations subsisting between them ; from its sacred pages have been drawn all the most ennobling sentiments and all the pious maxims which pervade and enrich the literature of our day : and but for it the earth in which we live would still have been the dark abode of ignorance and vice, filled with beings who knew no God save the product of their own evil hearts, and who owned no laws but such as their own corrupt minds devised. From it has gone forth the power which has changed our own country from the condition of barbarism and wretchedness in which it once lay, into that state of civilisation and comfort in which we now behold it. And what the Bible has done for Britain, the Bible can do for every nation under heaven. It needs but the free circulation and the universal study of that Book, to reclaim men everywhere from the bondage of sin and superstition : and it needs but the practice of its humanising maxims and the copying of its one perfect Example, in order to chase away savage manners from the earth—to break



the power of selfishness and ambition—to banish war and all its horrible accompaniments—to extirpate vice and tyranny and oppression in the many hideous forms in which they so often present themselves—to constitute mankind one great and loving brotherhood—and to knit all human hearts together in the blessed bonds of unity and peace. “I THE LORD WILL HASTEN IT IN HIS TIME.”

THE END.





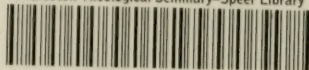




BOUND BY  
EDMONDS & REMNANTS  
LONDON

BS2555.4 .R64  
Discussions on the Gospels ...

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 00055 9379